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two dollars

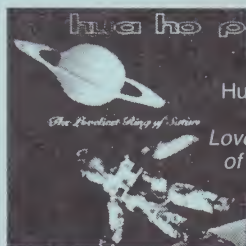
zum #9

boyracer
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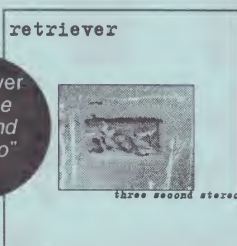
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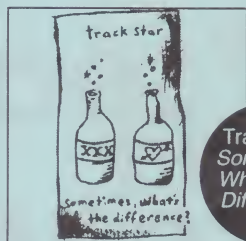
A Different Kind of Company, A Different Kind of Sound



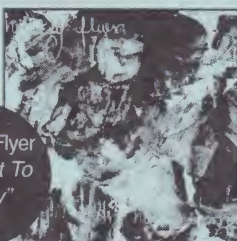
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"The Loveliest Ring of Saturn"
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"Three Second Stereo"
10"



Track Star
Sometimes, What's The Difference?
10"



Holiday Flyer
"Try Not To Worry"
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Danielle Howle About to Burst CD/LP

The long-awaited solo record from Columbia, SC's, Danielle Howle will knock your socks off. Fourteen songs swing from full band sound to just Danielle with an acoustic guitar, but no matter what, Danielle's incredible voice, her wit and her gift for songwriting shine through.

Ida I Know About You CD

Twelve tender new songs from NYC's Ida. On their second record, Dan Littleton (Liquorice/The Hated), Liz Mitchell, Michael Littleton are joined by a host of talented friends on bass, cello and violin, creating spare, graceful songs in which every line resonates with a certain beauty - bittersweet, generous, and hopeful.

Sea Saw Magnetophone CD

Full length from Arlington's four-track magician, Trevor Kampmann. A combo of guitar, drums and old casio, Trevor puts down eleven insidiously catchy songs with seemingly effortless pop hooks. "Tape generation loss has never sounded so good." - Alternative Press

Retsin Egg Fusion CD/LP

The second release from Louisville's Tara (Rodan/Sonora Pine) & Cynthia (Ruby Falls) and a lot of their friends. They march, they lope, they weave and spoon, but mostly they tell stories in voices you can recognize and appreciate. "...a barefoot, 14-song trek down a dusty back road of raw, biting emotions that are eloquently exorcized through the music and the lyrics." - CMJ

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THE WARMERS

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the Edit

So really, this issue is just something we had to get done to make it to the magic 10, which is going to be big news indeed. We're planning synchronized events on ten continents and free candy and condoms for all the kids. Who knows when #10 will be out, but we swear we'll do right by it. The plan is to put together a 10" with 10 of our fave bands (well, the ones we could get a song from). zum has always been itching to branch into the audio realm, and we think this is finally going to be it, so be on the lookout. Anyhow, far be it for us to do something half-assed, so we present this whole-assed issue, rightful bearer of the title zum#9. Six years of toil and multiple educational systems later, we're still plugging your mailholes with the goods. Interviews with some great bands, spieling, friction, and of course, our always insightful and timely reviews (ha ha). Since the last time we met, George has come of legal age, the monumental 21, though most of us still have trouble remembering that. We had a semi-surprise party (George wasn't *supposed* to know about it) at the Y with Cars Get Crushed, Kid Dynamo and the debut performance of Kublai Khan, a rad gift, no? We (megaweapon: George, Yvonne and Michelle) also performed for the first (and so far only) time in front of a paying public - of course, as the zum#8 release show, you had to expect some behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing to land that primo gig. Superstars Henry's Dress, TullyCraft, Skylab, and Allen Clapp and His Orchestra graced the Y lounge. Thanks again all who participated in the Y shows, as well as the Take Back The Night march and benefit. Now, to ask you a little favor - Yvonne has started a public affairs show to highlight community activism, so if you know any activists (be they organizers, writers, musicians, whatever) in or coming to the SF Bay Area, please drop us a line so they can be featured on her show. Ok, that's it. Don't be a stranger.

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Front cover photo by yc, photo this page by Elaine Chen

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SPECIAL THANKS: Our fine contributors, Ja & Kang, Mark & Nancy, Chris & Martha, Elena, Tony, all our parents, other sundry family and friends, those who continue to fight the good fight



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Mathew Fletcher 1970-1996
our hearts go out to those who lost him

PATHOLOGY OF EVERYDAY-by george

"there are doubts in your ability there are too many blanks in your analogy"

Misplaced longings and sound thrashings to self-estimation, what it's been lately. Where putting this out in the open seems at one point like salvation, really promotion of an already glutted flooded market, so elevate yourself above. Even angst is commodity, fill up before the blockade is enforced. We've an underground reservoir of self-consciousness, backbiting, crushes/friendships ground to dust, dispersed over twelve months and leaving a filmy layer over all through the lack of circulation. So air it out as the firmament presses down, collapses back into black weed waters. How can you grow up without giving up?

So much crippling language we pack in for not your amusement but our catharsis. It's become labor intensive but insensitive to why there needs to be another voice, what two or more voices bring in collision, more freedom. If the personal is political, what is the public? This still doesn't approach practice, no revolution through the photocopied solipsist spiel. If we really cared, we would change something, right? Still finding voice or community to back, space to occupy instead of hang out. No, we don't identify one position, one layer of understanding sought to puncture with ourselves. Sometimes I feel like I can mark out my path, stake a claim. I tried through this, five or more years evading the inevitable letdown, forcing out creativity. Still trying to convince myself someone cares, but probably not the way you needed them to. Hope someone down the road will look back like I do at Mission of Burma and say "that's still what it's all about." It's become a process unto itself, so we can get on with the rest of our lives, blaming burdens and birthing pains and wallet weighing. And now the geographical split, unequal distributions of creative capital that don't really consolidate anymore. Can we make it a nother six years, much less to another issue, and yes we have issues. Jaded now, what will I be reliving at thirty? You can try to leave home, but the demands are still burnt into retinas, translating every vision into the template responsibility.

"given the choice between your life and mine
I would do the stupid thing and let you keep on living"

When you feel like you'll never feel a gain, like your soul is numb asleep and no manipulation can restore circulation, what is that? Knowing the transitory status of my emotions, why bother shifting in any direction, dragging someone else down into my lameness? Cause it happens every so often, strewn friendships in a path of truncated greetings, awkward chatter and outright avoidance. You're told you know better, you learn, but fall for the unattainable each instant, and hardly ever upfront, because that's harder than anything you've done, and far less rewarding. "Do you want to do something about it?" I stuck all my eggs in one fall, wait for the allotted rot and smash by winter. But what about that soft spot wearing away for two years while fleeting needy lurches proved uneven and see that, that's whiplash, and that smudge that looks like my fingerprint, that's trauma. And all the sugar rush ice cream headaches don't compare to the slow burn-melt like dissolving a rock candy glacier, still preserving ex-carasses but carving monumental chasms.

Wanted to do anything for her, but she wanted nothing to do with me. That took long enough to figure out, but my calculator always blanks when you cover the solar cells. And that's what it was like, waning in spans, until the spell is broke. Now, I sit on sidelines, the last grasps and attachments stretched, see which ones last and which burst.

Ill take A
to 3/4 mile
pass B.



Passing Technique

THE OLD WAY

Remember how we
used to sneak up
behind A, r

THE NEW WAY

(Read from
bottom up.)

But continue at
slightly higher
speed than A
(if safe) in order
to give him clear
vision.

When you look
back and see it's
safe, begin pull-
back to your lane.

Don't make a
sluggish pass.
Get it over with
quickly, safely.

Accelerate firmly
after car is
straightened out
in passing lane.

GIVE ME ===== A COLUMN

With the advance of Britpop, I feel a necessity to retreat. Fashionable, skinny bad-natured louts don't do much for me and mine since days of Echo & the Bunnymen. The fact that it's been so long in the coming, a British band to break America, and that I can read about it in the Pink Section convinces me the genuine cultural importance of Britpop is vastly overestimated. While there might be a significant and influential minority of music fans that support this genre, without sounding xenophobic, it doesn't sound anything like revolution. I think what has disturbed me most about Britpop is the fandom inspired by this crop of would-be leaders. The rockstar/antirockstar pose and the ensuing fan relationship is a part of music that while impossible to ignore is hard to endorse. I think what we equate British bands with is decadence and glamour, difference that requires a form of worship. There are plenty of cultural fetishists of all stripes, but the Anglophile fits a specific profile of needing that sensitive androgynous white male that gets the joke we don't. American bands have become less-successful at inspiring that devotion in recent years, that even Pearl Jam's populism translates into being one with the little guy/consumer. Smashing Pumpkins are more the new prog rock than Tortoise, cultivating space pixie exotica at home. The split between audience and performer is going to be resolved, but I can hope for responsible fan culture in the face of rash choices. But the Britpop bands function solely as difference/distance; they can't conduct themselves as real people.

Back to music though, the British bands I've liked since the '90s are tellingly few; Boyracer, Wedding Present, Th Faith Healers, Heavenly, Huggy Bear, Stereolab. Out of those, few would rightly fall under the proper Britpop schematic though fans of one may be fans of the other. My recent discovery of Lungleg, Urusei Yatsura, Bis and Prolapse lead me to think the real deal is going down with the Scottish, who value innovation over ironic posturing.

Begin easy
"drift-out" pass.

Turn signal on.

Prepare for pull-
out very early.

modest mouse



has a van that's

Falling apart. Isaac calls it the "jackass shack," and it's brought them south for a two week jaunt from Seattle. They seem to be taking a loss on this investment though. "It comes out of all of our pockets, we had to borrow from Up. It seemed like a really good deal at the time, it ran great, and then we get it home and first thing we're driving it, Eric and I smell this funny burning." Eric, Modest Mouse bassist, found the burning smell coming out of the tire, and issues warning to all Seattle area car owners. "Charles Bartlett was his name. We're burning his house down when we get back." Singer/guitarist Isaac is equally subdued in his response. "I'm learning how to become a mechanic and all, but I didn't really want to go to mechanic school. We shoulda drove that thing into his front yard that day, into his house. 'Oh hey Charles I know you're seventy-two, got a heart condition!' It hasn't lost us any shows though." Drummer boy Jeremy reinforces the automotive-wariness, "next time we're renting a van."

But for the moment there is peace, the van confines are pumping the new Beck, two tape recorders for two different zines whirl along, and the band is done with their set at the newly reopened Heartbreak. Getting sparechanged on the Haight, some crusties ask Jeremy for a ride to Oregon since they're leaving for Eugene after the interview. My take on the Haight is not very favorable, the immodest display of whatever your subcultural affiliation/affliction makes me wonder how this scene looks to an outside eye. Spare interview for beer? We are multiple though, a dude from the East Bay Freebie Snackcake! has more prepared questions, maybe sensing what early claim is being staked.

We saw them at the Chameleon the week earlier with A Minor Forest and was stunned. Though I had heard superlative comparisons to Built to Spill and Archers, even Pixies, I was not prepared for what came. They fall between the cracks of genres, the Built to Spill comparisons more from Isaac's whammying pitch and toss, epic guitarisms and lyrical earnestness.

"I'm just saying you gotta sound really honest. I'm not there. Beck's there. I feel like there's a lot more to be asked of me in terms of that. I know, like after this really fucked up thing happened here in San Francisco, this guy helped us take our radiator out, and I did some speed with him and just talking, and I think he's a nice guy, he was here tonight, he's probably a really nice guy but when he was on speed, he all freaked me out so bad cause he was like talking like crazy shit, like I thought he was gonna kill me and stuff, and all trying to convince me to have sex with him and his forty year old girlfriend. It was too much for my brain to deal with, but like after that whole thing I was all freaked out and walking around, I made up a song that I totally know has soul, y'know, totally what I would want to

be doing, but I can't quite get there. I'm gonna get there."

The rewriting of Seattle's white boy blues may start with Modest Mouse. Geographically from the edges of urban Seattle, Jeremy from Yakima now lives in Bellevue and plays in Red Stars Theory and Satisfact. The formation of Modest Mouse actually intersects with neighboring legends, Lync, whose bassist James plays guitar for Red Stars Theory. "Isaac played with them before, and I played with them before it was gonna be called Lync, like it was gonna be me and Sam, but Dave wasn't in it," says Jeremy, who would have been a better drummer in our opinion. Eric met Jeremy at a Green Day/Crackerbash show five or six years back. "We met before, he asked me for a ride home before that and I told him I couldn't give him a ride home. He asked me if I wanted to start a band with him at that Green Day show." Jeremy elaborates "it was actually me and Eric and Sam and Dave from Lync, but it never happened. It ended up being me and Eric and this boy that played bass for Undertow. Hardcore straight edge band...I met Isaac through Eric. I bought a Downcast record from him."

Eric explains, "It started out the three of us and then I flaked out on it a couple times." Jeremy and Isaac, "played with this guy Dan, playing guitar, Dan Galluci. It was just me, Isaac and Dan on two guitars. And then this guy John joined it, and he played bass. He's from that band Hush Harbor and Mavis Piggot, he's in that and he played on that K single, International Pop Underground single. And then, we sort of broke up, but then me and Isaac decided that we wanted to still do it and we got Eric back in it and it's been like this two and a half years."

Their 7" on K's IPU series came from a longterm interest from Calvin Johnson. "He's an old friend. He's cool he's hip. I think he'd rather work with young people, he'll try stuff you know. Stuff that I did, first thing Dub Narcotic recorded it was Modest Mouse before Modest Mouse was at all good, which means like before those guys were in it. It was me in this guy's attic, Zebediah." I had songs Isaac did by himself with a four track on a compilation entitled Babble-on that sounds light years removed from their current sound. "Oh yeah, those were just Dial-a-songs." The cassette did actually give a phone number to hear more short songs left on an answering machine. "That was just what I was doing then, I did three tapes that were like shit like that. Some of them have stuff on it from like when he was fifteen, I was fifteen, he was seventeen, they were all like closet recordings." What seems really exciting in their evasion of the indie rock ghetto is expansion into dance music. Eric tells us, "We're doing something, recording with Dub Narcotic, like a Modest Mouse Dub Narcotic joint force dance record. Right a little bit after we get back." Modest Mouse has a definite groove, hand in hand with other post-indie minstrel Beck and Calvin's DNSS. Isaac doesn't claim Modest mouse's punkness anyhow. "We ended up coming up with dance songs and shit because we're into dance songs, we're not playing a type of music. I like hip hop. Rave music's okay I like going to raves." MM are reticent about any tech talk though, Eric doesn't like to talk about songwriting, "It comes from something you can't fucking

talk about really". Isaac is tired of bands who only talk shop. "They were turning music into mathematics and shit, and I failed at mathematics. You can't turn it into a fucking calculator." So don't call it Modest Math Rock.

Up is releasing their new CD EP on August 6, recorded by their friend/producer, Steve. Isaac explains how, "I totalled my car a couple days before we came out on tour, smashed the window with my head...the medics asked me if I wanted to go, and I was like I can't really afford to and they were like 'Okay,' packed up, towed my car and left me there like bleeding. So I was wandering around all disoriented, Steve took care of me, then he drove me around Seattle the very next day for hours. Super nice guy, he's our manager now, cause he takes care of us. He played with us, in the late seventies he was in this band King's Harvest who wrote that song, 'Everything is super outta sight.' He's done studio work with Kenny Rogers. He's totally one of the most true blue people I've ever met. [the ep has] Three new songs that kick ass, two songs off the album, then a five minute blank space and for anyone that bothers to listen to it there's like eight songs."

Eric: I'm completely fucking burnt out. Like I totally feel like we suck every time we play just because I'm so sick of the songs.

Snackcaker!: Sick of the songs? It hasn't been that long.

E: Yeah, see I don't know what we're gonna do, cause that wasn't that long of a tour. I'll have better equipment too I'm hoping.

That Santa Rosa show kicked ass, more than anything. Cops came. Sprayed people in the face with mace.

Jeremy: Hey Isaac, those kids got evicted.

Isaac: They told us to keep going and we did.

E: That show kicked ass, best show I ever played.

SI: So how do you guys write these songs, there's no songwriting credits on the records.

E: For the most part Isaac will come up with some guitar and singing, and then Jeremy and I will come in and change it around and add new parts.

J: Or we'll just start playing something at practice, just off the top of our heads. But sometimes Eric, like Dramamine, that was just a bass line.

E: I like songs where I have a bass line I play for like a long time, and you get to go off and do weird old guitar stuff. [Up records deal]

It wasn't until we all slept with Chris Taquino.

J: We did, so what. You would.

SI: I totally would, he's a babe.

J: There's nothing wrong with it. The mustache kinda bugged me. It was kinda ticklish.

I: It wasn't ticklish, it was prickly. It was like tag team, eight of us.

J: David Geffen, we could sleep with him. Madonna, Madonna has a label, Maverick.

J: We had this theme, like ever play Magic cards before? We had this idea we were gonna have this band that was all based on Magic.

-gc

prolapse

backsaturday's release (on Big Cat) is America's formal introduction to Prolapse, but I don't think we realize what we've domesticated.

Prolapse could start devouring our musical ecosystem with it's deranged anti-pop cross-breeding, but maybe it's time to burn earphones, melt vinyl into plowshares and start afresh. I had first heard them on Free Radio Berkeley of all places, then found the Pull thru' Barker (on Cherry Red) four song cd for \$1 in a used bin. Since then I've been hooked.

Comparisons to the Fall, Faith Healers and Dog Faced Hermans all point to the art damaged post-punk din that makes fans of jaded brats like me. On one of the hottest pre-summer days in April I trek into the Great American Music Hall mid-afternoon before their soundcheck.

Mick is asking me what the zine means.

George: Nothing.

Mick: Nothing?"

G: It means "by the" in German.

M: Oh cheers, brilliant, will be somethin' to read in the van. Know them really well, strange (looking at the boyracer picture). When did you start doing this?

G: Five years ago.

M: Really, and you've still not stopped?

G: We've been slow about it, it's been like one a year, so it's easy to maintain.

M: What do you do apart from this?

G: I'm a college student, go to Berkeley. Hi, how ya doing.

Linda: Okay. I feel fine. I like the weather, I love the weather actually better.

G: I can't deal with the weather.

M: You got a beer? Good hell, you started early.

L: I got one out of Stereolab's van.

G: Is their van like loaded with alcohol?

L: Kind of, there's a few bottles in the fridge.

G: What's your name?

L: Linda.

G: I'm George, hi. Is this your first time out to the U.S.?

L: It is.

M: Aye. First time ever.

L: First time ever. This is going to get really noisy.

M: You want to do it in here?

G: Yeah, we can go outside...

fans are lining up. Crazy. Did you all come in that van?

L: This is Stereolab's van.

G: What town are you from?

M: Well, we're all from all over the place. I'm from Glasgow, Scotland. Dave the guitarist is from Wales, and the rest of us are from all over England, Lancaster, Darbyshire and London.

G: And when did you guys get together and start playing?

L: We got together about four years ago but we've only started recording and touring and sort of doing things properly for about two years.

M: Just like we're going from a four-piece to a six piece, it's getting more and more chaotic as the years have went on, it's just got more and more disjointed and completely...it's not even like kinda growin and become really tight, it's like tight in some places and really shambolic in others.

G: What was the instrumentation when you started out, who was the original four?

M: It was very kind of male dominated, it was like Linda wasn't in it. There was just me, the bassist Mick, pa and the drummer, so it was pure kinda testosterone, shooting sky high.

L: So me and Dave joined, to add a girly element.

M: Dave's a girl as well.

L: Cause Dave's a girl.

M: Girl's clothes.

G: What sort of bands do you play with around England?

M: Very big match I suppose, like we just played with Sonic Youth. But the English bands we played with, we've done a tour with Gorky's Psychotic Monkey, d'you know them? Aye, they're from Wales, absolutely brilliant. They're like number one in the indie charts for about a month, toured with Stereolab. Flying Saucer Attack we've also played with, loads of stuff like that.

L: We play with all sorts of great bands.

G: Is there a particular group of bands that you're friends with that you consider yourselves a scene with?

L: We don't really want to be part of a scene you know, we get lumped in with the London scene but even though none of us are from there.

G: Do you live in London?

L: I do. Cause we know a lot of people in London, there's a big underground thing at the moment but it's got slated by the British music press as the Camden scene, because of that we don't really get lumped in with'em.

M: We really really carefully try not to become part of any scene whatsoever, like

even ones that were getting good ...destin for self. I mean I myself do like a lot of the bands, like Movietone and Scaffold, all the kind of underground British bands of the moment.

L: We all wanted to play with Sonic Youth and we're very happy to play with Stereolab.

G: Had you played with them a lot in England before? Did they just ask you to come on tour?

M: We played with them like twice.

L: Twice, I can't really remember.

photo by Borja



Mick and Linda

M: They sought it out, it was like they asked us and we got in contact with the record label Jet Set/Big Cat, they said okay, we'll get you the money if you want to go over, we were like "Brilliant, a free holiday."

L: That's the label that's just put out our, well it's our second album in Britain, first album in this country.

G: The thing I had found from you guys was the four song CD, Pull Thru' Barker, I was really happy to find it.

L: Oh right, you found that...

G: I found it in a knockoff bin.

L: That's amazing.

G: I got it for two bucks, I was so happy.

M: Brilliant, that's really hard to get, even in England. That was the second single, good for you.

G: Have you got a lot of attention in the U.S. so far, do you feel? Like a lot of interviews and press people?

L: we've been doing a bit since we've been here, a few interviews, we've done some radio, you know obviously this is our first time so as far as we're concerned nobody knows about us, but having said that, the gigs have all been packed for us and it sold out for Stereolab but it's been packed when we've gone on.

M: And everybody's been...radio came out, reviews in magazines and stuff, and supposed

to be doing a gig over in Britain that's going

prolapse

to be for MTV, America and Europe as well.

So it seems to be getting a lot of potential
kinda like.

G: Are you making videos and stuff like that?

M: We've already got two videos for Pull
Thru' Barker and the single,

L: It's been shown on sixty minutes. Is it sixty
minutes? Do you get it here?

G: One Twenty Minutes. We get it, but I don't
have cable personally.

M: It's same people that did Stereolab's video
Ping Pong.

G: So how do you like California so far?

L: Great, love it, strange drinking laws
though. It's not so much that cause we're all
over twenty one, but it's just, we've played at
venues that don't sell alcohol and you get
stopped at the door if you even carry it.

M: Can't smoke. I just get basically pulled in
by the bouncer off the street last night, cause
I was drinking alcohol as well.

G: Maybe it was the college campuses.

M: Aye, Troubadour they pulled me in off the
street but college campuses they're very
very strict. We just get loads of beer in the
van, drunk it all anyway. Aw, it's great,
California's brilliant, just so strange.

G: Have you ever been here before?

M: Never.

L: Never. None of us have been over.

M: Never been to America, been to Ireland.

L: I always thought I preferred Europe and
I'd never want to go to America. Now I've
been to both I hate Europe, like the main
continent, and I totally love America, I think
it's great.

M: I just think it's so different, I do love
Europe still but I think this so different, I
don't know if I could live here cause right
enough, it's not really my climate, I prefer
snow, I prefer fridges to cookers.

Leaving the van, I spot the weird bed setup
in the midsection, like Alien coffins housing
rock corpses. Chessa from L.A. joins our table
and ends up on the tape, more discussion on
drinking and the Troubadour.

M: Can the kids not all just get false
mustaches.

Chessa: My friend last night was wondering
what sign you were. He's really into
astrology.

M: I'm a Pisces.

L: I'm Virgo.

C: That's what he thought. He's really good at
that.

M: What'd he think I was, or was he just doing
Linda?

C: I don't remember.

L: Is he coming tonight?

C: No, he plays in a band called Slug. His
girlfriend is in a band with me, they were
really excited to see the show last night, they
live there though. Yeah, he's always trying to
figure it out.

L: That's really amazing that he can figure it
out.

M: I just like reading it in the papers, just to
like wake up in the morning and see what it
says and if you don't agree with it just say it's
a load of crap. I love it, trashy crap like that,
just good for a laugh.

C: But it's true though, since I started
learning about it, peoples' personalities, they
really match.

M: Aye. There's people I know that are all the
same kind of star sign like, just before I came
to America I lived in Lester, about a hundred
miles down from Scotland, nearly everyone
thinks I'm from Ireland or Australia. Just to
look at, must be because I'm so blond and tan.
It was really weird though, I was just down in
town and I bought this record called Pisces,
this old record from the sixties that told you,
like music on it a Pisces would like. The
woman who bought it off me was a Pisces.
Then I went into town and I met this girl I
knew and she was with her boyfriend and all
turned out each of us were Pisces as well, so I
just sat there getting drunk with everybody's
a Pisces.

I get the Scottish newspaper
everyday, I can get it in England now. We
just look up the stars cause they're always
ridiculous. They're always total crap. And at
the end it says your lucky color is stone.
Your lucky number is 95.

C: you want to know who's a Pisces also? Your
favorite person, Drew Barrymore

M: I didn't know. That's really weird. Cause
she does seem a wee bit... She was dead nice
but really in a way quite nervous. From what
I got she was really taut, and that's what all
Pisces are like.

She was real happy, just laughing about.
Seemed like quite good fun. Good to see her
hanging up and about. [at the previous
night's show]

David: I'm David and I'm Gemini, and I like...

G: We were talking about Geminis earlier,
eventually you'll be a back-stabber or
something like that.

Mick2: Mick. What'd you want to know?



L: Star sign.

M2: Scorpio.

M: We like ball games. We went to see the Dodgers, me and Dave. Got some beers, it was great, that old organist's organ, just the best thing ever. I want to buy one of those big organs. (Playing against) the Chicago Cubs.

The Dodgers lost?

D: The Dodgers lost, the Cubs won.

M: We had to leave before the end, to go do sounchecks and things. It was great. There was two boys beside us with replica bats hitting each other.

L: The two at the bottom, Tim is a very unlikely Virgo, and Pat is a Cancerian. But they can't say anything. Anything you'd like to ask? I live in London, and David lives in

London as well.

G: Where do you guys practice?

L: Usually in London but not exclusively, we don't practice often.

M: A lot of the time I don't go down, cause I'll make it up on the spot, sometimes I'll go down very rarely.

L: Mick has to spend five hours on a coach to get to practice, which in Britain is quite a long time to travel.

Mick 2: I live in the North of England near Newcastle.

G: What other bands have you all been in before? (Massive laughter erupts) Is that the wrong question to ask?

?: I was in Jungle in My Hair. You've not heard of them? There were some relevant ones, Me Mick and Tim was in this band called Smile, they're in loads of...we weren't very good, well we were sort of held back by a shitty singer.

L: And now you've got two great singers. I was in a band called Cellophane, not the Cellophane that ran in the paper but an unknown band and I was the drummer, and we were a fey indie band.

?: "I was in Oasis, not The".

M: I played bagpipes with this Scottish band Dorson. They put out a split single with this Japanese band, the Ruins. That's the only band I was in that's remotely known.

John Knox Force Field, Dave was in that.

L: I think what we're trying to say is everybody in the band has been involved in a lot of really stupid side projects.

I've got one. Hoffman; it's just me and a four track. And I've recruited a new member and he lives in Los Angeles. Met him last night decided, Ryan.

M: They're gonna redub Trainspotting in proper English cause Americans can't understand the Scottish accents, it's crazy.
L: [X-Files] I was really disappointed with that, I thought it was going to be really excellent

documentary style thing, and it turned out to be just a sort of scripted drama, I was so disappointed. I thought it was going to be a real documentary thing.

M: I hoped it was going to be like Twilight Zone, I think Twilight Zone's weirder than the X-Files.

G: Do you like that sort of conspiracy thing?

M: I love that, anything that can completely twist your brain about and make you think things like that could happen.

G: Do you think we have visitors?

M: Why not.

G: You've got crop circles too right?

M: They're all crap, totally man made. Although one weird thing happened lately which made me think crop circles could occur, I do archeology out in the fields and I was on top of this hill, and this mini-twister came up, and like everything in its path. It lifted my jumper up it off the ground and took the parking meters up in the air, spun it around. [Mick digs up] Flint tools...Roman skeletons, Midlands of England.

L: I haven't got a day job but I've got a computer, I'd really like to be a writer. Not novels but screenplays. I just sit at my computer and tap out story lines, but I know it's going to take years and years and years to ever get that far...It is a case in London of who you know. I suppose one of the problems is I like '60s kitchen sink stuff, British, and that's not fashionable at the moment. Really earthy stuff, Mike Leigh he's excellent yeah. I like that choppy style.

G: Do you find writing lyrics for songs works out the same way as writing ideas for scripts?

L: Yeah kind of in that I don't do a big plan with a beginning, middle and end, I just start like that and just go. And it's like that with the lyrics, just start at the beginning and just go, don't know where it's going to go.

G: How does that work out when you've got three people singing?

L: Dave does the vocals on one song, me and Mick don't work together to write our lyrics, we just sort of get on with it separately and occasionally our paths will cross lyrically and we go "Aw that's amazing" but generally we don't collaborate. We just kind of know that it's going to be all right.

Mick's dad has photos of Buddy Holly's personal affects, locked away in a Lubbock police station and rediscovered eight years ago. Somehow the day the music died, the overdetermination of star signs and crap circle metaphysics is a fitting close. Look up "Prolapse" in the dictionary, and you'll find a nasty medical condition, but if you find it in a record store don't be afraid to pick it up. -gc



POSTER CHILDREN



Though this might have been better suited to our retrospective #10 issue (like a "Where are they [all the bands we've interviewed] now?" kind of thing. Did you know all the bands we interviewed in the last issue have broken up? we're a curse! yeah, right), we felt any time is the right time for the P-kids. So, as an update to Randy's snail mail interview with Rose (1992) in issue #6, here's Charan, Northwestern grad student and member of the famed Evanston, IL quartet The Great Brain, with the electronically-transmitted lowdown.

Considering that the Poster Children are currently at work on their fifth studio album, it seems a little lame to describe them. Their music and their label have been instrumental in the artistic development of the Champaign-Urbana music community. And whereas their music has been constantly developing, you can always depend on a wall-of-guitars and a rhythmic riff in any Posterkids tune. And their live show is intense. So I e-mailed bassist (and technophile) Rose Marshack some ?s, and she gave me some answers. I must admit, I was impressed. For any band, the level of control they exert over their music is unique. For a band on a major label, it's amazing. Their attention to detail exemplifies their love for their craft, and a real appreciation for their fans. So that's enough crap from me. Here's the interview:

>>>What was the reasoning behind releasing the *Just Like You* EP right before releasing *Junior Citizen*?<<<

Well, we wanted to tour last fall, and we weren't done with the full recording yet; the guy who was mixing it could only mix 6 songs and then had to work on another project, and then could get on with the rest of the songs. So we had him mix those 6 songs and then we released it as an EP so we could go on tour with it! We made the record label promise to sell it for cheap (around \$6), which they did. The crappy thing that happened is that some crooked distributors started selling it to stores for over \$10, so some stores had the thing marked at \$12-\$15, for an EP. Infuriating.

>>>I know you've been touring extensively since *Junior Citizen* came out. Any interesting tour stories? What was it like playing Lollapalooza?<<<

For interesting (and uninteresting) tour stories, I'd really have to direct you to our web page, <http://www.prairienet.org/posterkids/> since I pretty much wrote something each day. This tour we saw a robbery, about 3 hours east of Los Angeles, on our way to Phoenix! We were sitting in a deserted restaurant, and we heard a loud crash that kept going on! We looked over at the door and there were two huge guys stealing the cash register. The cook and the waitress just stood and watched them, and then the police came later. We were scared, but it all happened so fast!

Lollapalooza was incredible. Jim tells a great story about his experience - each day there were portapotties, that's the only place you could go to the bathroom. Jim, our guitarist went into one the first day, and looked into the hole and floating in the mess of human waste and toilet paper was a *syringe*. He says that pretty much sums up his experience at Lollapalooza. My experience was better - we have met a lot of the bands like Pavement and Jesus Lizard before, so they were

very friendly to us, and it's always nice to talk to Sonic Youth. Since we've been around for 8 years, and we were back in that old "indie" crowd, the older bands have all heard of us, and I'd like to think we sort of have credibility with them. They know we have worked hard and that we love what we do. The audiences were incredible, too; just a bunch of people looking forward to hearing new music, instead of the usual stuck-up, close-minded people you sometimes find at shows. We sold an awful lot of t-shirts! I was terribly sad when it ended.

>>>How do you feel, being sort of the "Elder Statesmen" of the Champaign scene, and then seeing it blow up like this? How do you think the attention will affect the local music community?<<<

Well, a couple of years ago, Rick and I decided that there were too many great bands in Champaign and they were being ignored, so we decided to start a record label, **12 Inch Records**. We started this label in order to put out the first HUM record, because no one would listen to them! We took them on tour with us, and put out their 2nd record, and told everyone in every interview we did that the Champaign Scene was the greatest scene in the world. We put out a couple of other great records as well, one by Lovecup and a couple by Steakdaddy Six and Dis-. Our newest release is by Steakdaddy Six, and is called *Houstonia*.

For me, our scene pride grew even more when I heard other bands dissing on their hometown scenes; I couldn't understand why a band would not want to support their fellow musicians. Rick is just plain supportive of anyone, so it just comes naturally to him, plus he always wanted a record label. I think that support in the scene only helps the scene grow; it's the same way with anything. Now HUM is doing quite well, and another band who was from here, Menthol has a new record out as well. The HUM guys in turn support the local scene, and I know they always speak well of us - I think we may get more press because of them!

>>>I can see that with the attention you've been paying to your web page, your "interactive press kit", etc., that you're really moving towards making your music more accessible to your fans through technology. And now, recently you told me that your next album will be released as a CD ROM. What's up with that? Also, tell us a little about your involvement with Prairienet.<<<

Well, Rick and I are computer programmers, so even when we're on tour, it's hard for us to keep away from technology. We get bored sometimes. We intend to release a CD+ for our next CD, which will have "interactive" stuff on it as well as music. We are going to be programming this all ourselves. (We do everything ourselves!) Prairienet is our community freenet, here in Champaign. A freenet is a wonderful thing; all communities should have one. It is run by the department of Library Sciences of University of Illinois and runs off of donations from people in town. We recently played a benefit for Prairienet. Our web page resides on Prairienet.

>>>Finally, I understand you're working on a new LP. Who's producing it? Where are you recording it at?<<<

With our last album, *Junior Citizen*, we proved to ourselves and to our record label that we were able to produce a record ourselves; the guy who was "producing" the last record really kept his hands off most of it. So we'll be producing this next one ourselves, and hopefully recording it here in Champaign, in a studio right down the street from our house! Our record label, Reprise Records, is very hands-off as well; they trust us, and we are very happy with them.

>>>The songs on *Junior Citizen* show a trend towards more involvement of Rose on backing vocals, which works really well on "He's My Star". Is that a trend that you plan to follow on the new record?<<<

Yes, definitely. The reason you hear more of me is because first of all, I am getting more confident, and second, we are taking more control over our recordings, and Rick is being allowed to pump up the volume on the backup vocals; those being mine. Rick keeps saying that many "producers" refuse to have backing vocals on songs as loud as the main vocals; Rick wants to have them the same volume. I don't care, as long as they sound good.

In the grand tradition of Crass and GBH...



BOYRACER

If you see any reviews that put Boyracer in the same paragraph with these two bands, you know right off that the writer was too lazy to listen to the record, lifting (erroneously) from the Zero Hour bio for Boyracer's latest release, *In Full Colour*. Actually, Boyracer is one of the main contenders for the title of Leeds' greatest gift to indie rock and is certainly one of the finest young bands out of England these days. Their choppy, feedback-ridden complex guitars and rhythms, buoyed by great lyrics of interpersonal trauma and impassioned vocals, can elevate you to a plane far above the Brit-pop masses.

Boyracer is a friendly four-piece made up of Nicola (bass/vocals), Stewart (vocals/guitar/drums/bass on the rare occasion), Matty (guitar/vocals), and Ged (drums/guitar/vocals). They have two full lengths out on Slumberland Records, *More Songs About Frustration and Self Hate* and *We Are Made of the Same Wood*, as well as a multitude of other releases. This is their second trip to the US and a lengthy one at that (3 months compared to 3 weeks in October '94). We caught up with them in the middle of a 3-day Bay Area Boyracer fest. Here's some of what we learned.

The Boyracer line-up as we know it didn't fully come about until the middle of July '94.

Stew: I used to be in this other band called Boyracer before I was in Boyracer and there were different people in it. The line-up changed about two years ago. It's a well-documented story - they ran off with all my money and left me with an LP to record for Slumberland, which I recorded with the help of these two, Nicola and Matty, and we had a different drummer then. So we recorded the LP and found Ged about six months later. Ged had been in the band a week when we did that Peel Session. We were just warming up to it until Ged was on the scene and then we knew we could do our stuff properly.

Ged: Talking about when I joined, I stumbled into a really bad drum shop, not knowing why I was there, because my friend dragged me there. And on this wall, I hunted through all these pieces of paper and there it was - Boyracer, require punk rock drummer. I just thought that was me and there I was.

Ged started drumming at 14 (he's now 20) and drumming was where Stewart actually started. "I'm a drummer, I'm not a singer. I used to play drums in Hood [a great Leeds band. Stew ended up trading places with a guy in the earlier Boyracer...a good thing too] and I used to play drums in City of Leeds Youth Concert Band. I played orchestral drums." Stew does an amazing turn on drums live when Ged's busy playing guitar and singing on his song "Goblin". Ged's been playing guitar for about a year. Nicola's played bass for 7 years and I didn't get around to asking Matt, but he's really good, so let's just figure he's been at it a while.

Some of the best songs off of *More Songs...* have the great two bass thing, but that's something we'll probably never get a taste of live.

Nic: When the line-up changed, I think Stewart was planning to record a lot of it. I don't think he expected to get a band together in time to do the Slumberland thing. He used to play bass in the other line-up. And it was two guitars. So, he was still stuck on playing bass for them, so some of the songs were written with him writing the bass lines, so he just carried on doing that and I just kind of joined in when I could. It only happened on a few songs. We haven't done that for a long time. We did a couple of gigs in Holland when we did the two bass thing. We took



another bass with us, but apart from that, we haven't done that. So, that's not happening on this tour.

Stewart has a project called HulaBoy which is a collaboration with Eric Stoess of Hula Hoop. Nicola is also in another "band". "I have another band which isn't really a band. We just do like one gig a year. Just when it's convenient to do it really. It's not really an on-going, hard-working project like Boyracer is or anything. It's not a full-time occupation. It's just like, 'aw, should we play the Packhorse?', 'yeah', and that's it for another year. It's just that kind of thing. (The sound is) really slow, really boring, really quiet. Nothing like Boyracer. So we'll probably do a seven LP deal with Zero Hour or something because I think it could work with them well in the future. I think they understand where the slow, 78 bpm [they used to be called Hem] sound's at. I think Justine would get on with them really well.

Stew: Zero Hour knows what the kids want and they're there to give them it.

Nic: and it's that. More boring music.

They don't like labelmates Varnaline, but like Anders Parker's other Zero Hour band Space Needle. Ged likes Chomp. "Nice kids, they're like Reservoir."

Before they left for this tour, everyone had been keeping themselves busy.

Matt: Stewart, Nicola, and Ged were all unemployed, not doing anything, and I've just been [lots of consternation from the rest of the band at Matt's poor choice of words. In his defense, I had asked whether they had been working before they left.]. Well, they've been doing things, but they haven't had jobs, and I've just been doing temporary jobs between doing things with the band."

Nic: Excuse me, yeah, while I was unemployed, I was doing things, like trying to sort out all the bands that were playing the Sound City thing and stuff like that. I was being really productive in my spare time and constructive, and so was Ged and so was Stewart so...

Stew: I was writing indie hits in my bedroom.

Ged: I was a student for a while and I was reading computer studies and economics. It was OK, but then I decided indie pop, indie pop. And away I went with the indie pop. It was either pull out then or not

be able to go about, so I decided to pull out early, maybe bum around for a while. And then there I was, traveling, there I am. And when I get back, straight back to studying. That's me. Study, study, study. Hard worker. Very hard worker. That's probably why I play drums.

Matt: OK, so I was the one who was wasting my time, working in an office, when I should've been working on the indie hits. I don't know why I bothered.

Nic: Matt actually traveled for a long time before he had to get the crap office job because he got in debt for traveling. That's the price you pay kids for traveling around Spain with no money."

A further explanation as to what Nicola, and Stew, were working on, an alternative to Radio One's

Leeds Sound City.

Nic: Sound City is a festival that moves around each year and it was Leeds turn so we set up some gigs in a small venue that we play normally anyway. We weren't involved in being booked by the official side of it. We just did it regardless of what was going to happen. It was five nights of different bands that we put on.

A Leeds' band headlined every night,

or from the surrounding area. Then we had Beatnik Filmstars [from Bristol] one night and Dumb, a band from Manchester, as well. (Sound City -) Radio One sort of sponsor it and then they kind of drag in Menswear and all the bands that are making it in London anyway, or that kind of thing.

Stew: They got a load of out of town bands, which to us defeated the object of having it in Leeds in the first place

Nic: The bands that get attention anyways kind of got the big slots so it seemed to defeat the object of having it move around to different cities. A bit of a contradiction there going on, but never mind. (The venue -) We booked it well in advance and because we'd played there before, they're really good to us at that venue (the Packhorse). They actually gave us the room for free for the whole week. So we just had to book the P.A.. Normally it's a standard venue (the Duchess) that a lot of smaller American bands get



photo by matty

booked into, but it's changed hands recently so it's not too good and it's really expensive to put on our own shows there so we kind of went to this other pub and they're really good and let us have the room really cheaply. It's only like 10£ anyways if we want to pay for it, because it's just really small.

Stew: The other venue that we normally book things at, it's 100£ to cover the P.A. so... [they would still have to pay the sound guy on top of that so they just do it themselves.]

Nic: we don't really bother with that one anymore.

Stew: The last show we did there, we put Further on there and we lost a lot of money 'cause like nobody came.

Nic: And it (Packhorse) doesn't really sound much worse because the Duchess, the other venue we're talking about, doesn't really sound too good in there ever anyway. So, we're just kind of forgetting about that now.

Stew: We haven't played there for nearly a year

Nic: It (Sound City) was a week before we came away so there was a lot of organization for coming away that we were doing in the middle, and I was moving out of the house, loads of chaos going on. Loads of bands staying. But amongst bands were Beatnik Filmstars; Dumb; Boyracer; Beachbuggy, who is Darren of the Wedding Present's band, and Keith's in it now as well, who used to be in the Wedding Present, and they're really good. A new band called Rudolph Rocker from Leeds; Hood; 78 bpm which was Hem and that's what we're called now, with Justine who runs Hemiola Records. Then there was Andrew Beaujon [from Eggs], who flew over. He was coming to spend a week anyway so he came over to see it all and we played a gig that week. That was me, Justine, Andrew and Stewart drummed for that on that night, so that was fun. Then there was a whole night, the Saturday, the last show of it, which was a label called Crackle Records which is a load of really really fast punk rock bands. So there's four, one called Chopper; Skimmer and two others. They're really really fast noisy. Lungleg played as well. They're from London. They were really good. Hemiola sort of had a night. It wasn't strictly Hemiola, but it was like Kenny Prothetine (?), the Andrew thing, and Beachbuggy who will be doing a Hemiola single I think. ChaChaCoin (?) would have played it, but their singer's from Austin so she wasn't around to do it.

But we tried to make it as much a Leeds thing as possible. It was more varied than the official thing anyway.

John Peel came as well, which is good. He came on the first night which happened to be when we were

playing. Because I walked out of the venue and he was just sat there waiting to come in, and when he walked out, he said "Oh, I'll come tomorrow night" and he did but he left really early and we didn't see him for the rest of the thing. But on his show the week after, he said "I must apologize for not coming to the Packhorse the rest of the week" because he was doing official stuff as well, so it was weird because he was part of the Radio One thing, but he was straight up to where we were doing stuff every night. He wasn't taking any notice of the whole Menswear, Manic Street Preachers scene. It was just straight up the road. So, that was really good of him and he mentioned loads of stuff that we did prior to the week. It was really good. And he asked us to keep a tour diary as well, which we've been doing along the way [on audio tape], so hopefully he'll read some of that out. Well, I've just heard from Justine today that they've been playing a lot of the Beatnik Filmstars and he played "Two" off the LP last week. He's our hero. We love him.

So, that was Sound City. It was good fun. It was loads of organization though. To sort out the line-ups. Me and Justine, and Stewart and Richard from Hood and Becky and Dave from Crackle, we all kind of had these meetings. Three meetings before and there was a lot of tension, a few arguments, but it could've been a lot worse. I don't know. The whole thing about getting the bands in was a bit of a stumbling block because straight away, we just thought "Oh, brilliant. Sound City's coming. We'll get loads of bands that we know." And then we thought, "Well, wait a minute, it should just be Leeds.." But then we kind of didn't know enough Leeds bands to pad it out, so we brought some in. But it wasn't as if they weren't connected to us. I mean, the Hemiola thing was connected to Leeds and the Crackle thing, even though two of Becky's bands weren't from Leeds, they were still a label based in Leeds that goes unrecognized sort of thing. It was definitely worth doing.

All we said at the gigs was that even though it's Sound City week and there's a lot going on in the city, we just kind of said we do this all year round so at least introduced it to all the people who would maybe not have come to our gigs. But it was brought to their attention that week that we do stuff. So we kind of mentioned that it wasn't just because (Sound City was in town), although it was, because we wanted to get the extra people in and make it clear, we just wanted to sort of say we do it anyway. We put gigs on at that venue yearly, so... We always put successful gigs on there. It's really really small and

we charge... it was 2£ for 4 bands [that's less than \$1 per band for those of you who don't know your conversion rates. What a bargain!]. Then it kind of got weird because it got more successful than we imagined. The week before, even though it's a small venue, we were kind of worried about whether it was going to work at first. We had the NME on the phone going "Oh, what's going on? What're you doing? Can we have +2?" And then someone else rang up. All these people we'd never heard of., never even take notice otherwise. So we had this massive sign on the door saying "No guest list". It was 2£ for 4 bands. If a journalist from London, who's working, can't afford 2£ to see 4 bands... but they still asked. And then there was some sort of incident with Hood on the door because they were trying to blag (?) their way in and there was some sort of argument about it. Of course they mentioned it in the paper which kind of defeats the object because Hood got the press anyway so it's kind of funny.

Speaking of their country's one party, two body make-or-break hype system, Boyracer has yet to be subject to their circus antics, and that's OK.

Nic: We got an advance piece in Melody Maker and we've got the occasional singles review and stuff, but we don't send our stuff to it. I don't know. I'm in two minds about it because I don't really keep up to date with it a lot of the time. I mean Stewart really really hates it. I agree with him, it's like a total waste of time. The thing here is sort of much better when it's all split up, it's a lot more dispersed, the fanzines and magazine scene. In England, it's totally based on what those two things say. So that's really dodgy, it's kind of dictated a lot. But, at the same time, I

like finding out what they're saying. Just out of interest, not out of that I agree with it. Just to know what they're doing and what they're saying is quite useful really. There's some decent things you can get out of it, but I don't really care to take it as gospel.. I just kind of flip through it and think oh this is news and this is what they're saying about Leeds. Usually I just read Justine's copy, I don't ever buy it myself. We all kind of share one and then throw it in the bin or something. We've all got different opinions on that thing. Stewart gets quite stressed about them and they are crap, but I don't know. I just think knowing your enemy can't be a bad thing.

Now, anyone who's seen Mike Slumberland during a Boyracer set knows he loves them. So how did this Zero Hour thing come about? The ZH people went to seem them in NY and Chicago on the last tour. They were surprised by ZH's interest since the NY show was "very crap". ZH offered them a three

album deal and they weren't comfortable with signing a contract for that length of time so they signed a one-LP deal.

Stew: and they gave us some money and flew us over here, we're doing a big long tour and that was that really. Not exactly sure whether we'll do another record with them. We'll have to see how much money they offer us (snort) [apparently the ZH guy earned all his money from the stock exchange and he's a "nice guy but too much money for his own good. He's got more money than sense."]
Nicola was very reluctant to comment. "I think they're very nice people."

Ged: We know that's not true though. Would you like to exaggerate on that?

Nic: I'm saying nothing.:

On the upside, they've gotten to spend a good chunk of time in the US, and in hotels rather than on floors. They spent a lot of time on the east coast and didn't play many shows considering how long they were there. In Ann Arbor, they played with JJ's band and the Fags, "very fast shouty punk rock, in the vein of Minor Threat, but with two girl vocalists, age 15 and 17. They were very good, if you like that sort of thing". They also liked the Robots, a band they played with in Boston at the Middle East. "They were good fun". They thought Portland's Sone were nice, having played with them in Boston as well, but at a separate show. They managed to see New Bad Things play over in the east, Philadelphia.

Matt: It would've been great to play with them because they were brilliant live. Great guys as well. We were disappointed they didn't make their shows down here.

Stew: I heard they'd just had enough of being on the road and just pulled out of the tour half way through it.

Matt: I think they'd just been to Europe as well.

Stew: Plus, there's like so many of them in the band that I can imagine it's a lot difficult, and they've got such a tiny van and there's ten people crammed in it."

They also liked Track Star, who played with them at the Phoenix Theater in Petaluma. Stew liked the marquee - "Boyracer and friends Sunday night", though the venue itself was "a bit too big for bands like us". They came straight from Colorado to the Bay Area, having found out from their driver (rather than their booker or label) that their Seattle gig had been canceled.

Unfortunately, they played with a lot of bands they didn't like.

Nic: There's been a lot of cases of "Nice people, shame about the band" incidents going on. Except Marry Me Jane were the worst band in every department. We sat through the sound check but we didn't see them.

George: Was it part of the Rolling Stone tour?

Stew: It was part of a totally shit tour, whatever it was. They were the worst band in the world. The funny thing was, they spent two hours soundchecking, forcing us to miss our soundcheck. They had all set up, no exaggeration, set out twelve guitars on stand on the stage. They had the most annoying tour manager called Larry, who I wanted to smash his stupid ugly face in. And then the girl singer comes in, having not set the stage up or anything, having the roadies set it all up, and she walks in, all the guys are on stage waiting for her, and she says "OK guys, let's make this the fastest soundcheck in goddamn rock 'n' roll history!" and then proceeded to take two hours. Yeah, I'd hate to see what the rest of her history was.

Ged: The fun thing about that show was that once we played, everybody left.

They played with Babe The Blue Ox as well, and didn't like them, but they were hoping that their booker, Joel Mark of Nectarine, would book their tour. Instead, they ended up with some woman called Lucia doing it.

Stew: We haven't met her yet and we're not looking forward to it. She's been rude to a lot of friends of ours. She's been getting us money for shows, but she's put us with a load of very inappropriate bands. We've played with very few bands that we actually like. It's good being the middle band on the show [between DC's Bluetip and Clockbrains] because we've got a lot of friends coming down tonight - the Henry's Dress kids. We're playing with Henry's Dress tomorrow, which we're very much looking forward to. They're great.

Matt: Yeah, we like their album (*Bust'em Green* on Slumberland) and they're nice kids.

They like them so much that they're driving from Florida to Cleveland so they can hook up with them and Rocketship to play a show.

Life on the road has consisted of a lot of stops at Subway.

Stew: We've eaten a lot of good food actually. Burritos today. Thai...

Matt: You can always get a good variety of foods in America. Well, on each coast, I'm not sure about in the middle. It gets a bit desolate really.

Nic: In England, if you've got the money, like in London, you can get a really wide variety of foods, but it's really expensive.

Stew: It's a lot more expensive to eat out in England than over here.

Ged: The things in England are generally more expensive though, I'd say.

Matt: Some things, yeah.

Nic: England's really shit. We want to just live here forever.

Stew: We all moved out so at the moment we don't have a house to go back to.

Matt: I'm not really missing England at all. It sometimes gets a bit hard on the road 'cause, obviously, five people [band + driver] in a van together traveling thousands of miles can get to be a bit too much. It's been OK so far. It's weird to think we're only half way through the tour. We've got a long way ahead of us but it should be OK.



Hopefully the same can be said of Boyracer's future.

Matt: I'm moving to Spain in September in fact. I've got a job over there. I'm going to be a nursery assistant. So, that should be interesting. I'm moving to Madrid, so I don't know what my future is with Boyracer. Who knows.

Ged: I'll tell you what your future is. It's nothing. No, I'm sure that we'll be able to continue no matter what the circumstances are because we're all so close and tight and intimate like that. We just won't be able to live without each other. You couldn't do without me. The band would suffer without me.

Nic: This is the future..

Stew: We're going to get home, compile a compilation LP for Slumberland Records, maybe do another LP, and then split up because we've had enough of each other. Pure speculation.

Ged: He's [Matt] going to Spain, I'm going back to college... [to film school no less] Matt and Ged have something in the works "It's just a project that me and Ged have been planning for some time. It is sort of a money making project. I need some money to fund myself, my move to Spain. Madrid is quite expensive."

Ged: That's the way me and Matt are trying to go, maybe with a bit more of a slowed down ambient edge. (In reference to "Goblin"?)

No matter what happens to Boyracer, they've left us a musical legacy. They're up to 189 songs now.

Stew:. I've got them all on computer at home 'cause I keep getting letters of really obsessive fans and I have to go over to my mum and dad's computer, and I've got a little disk at my parents' house.

Nic: I think the word here is trainspotter(?).

Stew: They ask me and they write to me and they say "Hey Stew, where can I get your flexi from two years ago?" and I say, 'Hey man, I don't know. We only pressed twenty-five copies so it's totally sold out' which would be the reason for us doing a compilation on Slumberland, which I think's going to be at the end of this year. I don't know when Mike gets his act together, gets some money together.

In the meantime, we'll just have to cross our fingers and wait. Long live Boyracer.



Other recent Boyracer recordings available in the US:

Home Recordings 1994-95: Pain, Plunder And Personal Loss 10" (Happy Go Lucky, PO Box 44342, Cleveland, OH 44144)

Racer 100 EP one-sided 12" (Blackbean & Placenta Tape Club, 1242 Meta St, Ventura, CA 93001)

an introduction to

THE SEA AND CAKE

We had lived in the shadow of ignorance. The Sea And Cake - the players and their brand of mellow jazzy indie rock. Many of you may be subject to the same false consciousness - you know the name, maybe have heard a song or two, but really couldn't tell us more. This piece should clear the way for the beautiful glow of enlightenment to fall upon you too. Welcome to our conversation with guitarist/vocalist Sam Prekops.

We met the unassuming figure of Sam in front of the stage door to the Bimbo's 365 club in North Beach. Chandan joined us and we headed down the street to Rico's, an incredibly overpriced burrito joint (\$8 for an entree! We were definitely far from the Mission or anywhere sane for that matter). Guitarist extraordinaire Archer Prewitt and bassist Eric Claridge were already eating when we got there, but didn't join us. Drummer, multi-instrumentalist, and engineer/producer John McEntire was back at the club doing soundcheck with his other project, Tortoise.

We started with history. Sam has lived in Chicago since he was five and used to play guitar and sing in the band Shrimpboat, his first and only band prior to The Sea And Cake. "We'd been around since '87, but for two years, we played parties." They put out their first album, Bar/None released two, and then they put out another compilation. The band eventually split up. "We had been together a long time. I can't remember who



quit first. Dave, the bass player, quit first. We went through a few line-up changes, but of the most active Shrimpboat line-up, Dave, and then Brad Wood quit later. [Brad Wood, as we all know, is the superengineer/producer of such bands as Liz Phair (her old touring bassist plays in 5iveStyle), The For Carnation, Trenchmouth] And we sort of made the big mistake of trying to carry on for a little bit longer. And that didn't work. But I was ready. Shrimpboat could have been several bands in some way. Not because of personnel, but because we started from zero. No ability whatsoever. Plenty of spirit. And it went on for quite a while. We were able to evolve over a pretty long period of time. So I think that's why we were able to keep doing it."

With the demise of Shrimpboat, The Sea And Cake found its start. "Shrimpboat split up and then Rough Trade UK, who used to put out Shrimpboat albums in the UK, offered up some money for... guess I said I was looking to do something for Eric and I. Eric was in the last part of Shrimpboat and the very beginning. So they gave us five grand to do a record. At that point, once I said yes, I decided I had to figure something out. Because I really wasn't sure, being out of the one musical situation I'd been doing, and that's the only one. So, I was a little freaked out. "

Sam didn't end up pulling everyone together until the end. "We were set to record in a September, I can't remember, two years or three years ago. So I pulled out my four-track and did a lot of work on that. Sort of got the songs pretty well together. Then about two weeks before we were to record, I called Archer up, who I'd known for a really long time but had never played with before. That really worked out. Brad was actually playing drums in the beginning on the first record a little bit. And then we fired him because he had a really bad attitude. John was hanging out and I asked him because I sensed... I didn't know John either, until that day. I asked if he might be interested and he really was totally into it. And I knew that Brad couldn't actually be in a band anyways

because he's too busy with other shit. So, that's how it came together. He's busy with worse stuff now though."

Chicago's Thrill Jockey ended up putting out that first record since Rough Trade didn't release it in the states and hardly did anything with it. ("I think it was sort of a vanity project for the guy because he really loved Shrimboat. I mean he loved the record, but they weren't ever going to sink a lot of money into it."). Thrill Jockey has also put out The Sea And Cake's subsequent releases (*Nassau*, *Biz*). Thrill Jockey has released quite a variety of music (Tortoise, Freakwater, A Minor Forest) and Sam gives some insight as to how the label has grown. "It's this one woman, Bettina Richards, who runs it. Just like anything else, it's evolving. She's doing these records by this German duo, Oval, which is fairly experimental, sort of ambient. It would be under that territory. But it's a lot different than whatever you would assume it might be. We've all sort of gotten... it's becoming a weird group effort in some ways. Through John is how we got into that, and then through us all being into it... we go record shopping together. How decisions are made are really like... because we all hang out together. So it's how it became known that she could put out these records, through various associations. And that her tastes would lead that way is just through... just like how anyone buys records, it mutates. You don't listen to all the records you got a couple years ago. So I think she's really good at that."

For this tour, they are on the road with Chicago scene compadres Tortoise and 5iveStyle. An advantage to that is they can share equipment because of mutual members. "We use all the same drums, bass. All the amps stay up there for all the bands. Actually 5iveStyle uses a different one. He uses Marshall. There's a cargo van with all the stuff. There's a huge amount of shit. I mean Tortoise has got prog rock gear. If we were on our own, we wouldn't really need that much stuff. No roadies. We're all the roadies." The line-up is diverse yet not incompatible, "There's plenty of crossover. Sometimes I hear from people, 'Why is this fucking Tortoise band playing? They suck. You guys are great. They should be opening for your asses.' I say technically it's a double bill. Sometimes it's hot, well not hot, because people will leave because it's too late, so I feel like we actually have the prime spot."

Since Tortoise is getting a phenomenal amount of hype, does The Sea And Cake feel overshadowed by them? "A little bit. I don't really... On the last tour, the small one, I did about five times as many interviews. Their record just came out, ours has been out, so the dynamic is definitely different. Yeah, they get a huge amount of attention. Good for them. More people show up." What about any competition between the two Johns (McEntire and Herndon (5iveStyle), both in Tortoise)? "No. They'll both be like, 'Man, I suck. You're the fucking best.' They're both full of humility. They're both like, especially John Herndon, is really like a sensitive guy, easily miffed, because he's always like, 'I can't play John, you're the best.' Really. They're actually really different drummers. Not necessarily in the way they think, but their natural abilities are different. John McEntire is much more mathematically precise and John (Herndon) is possessed with the swing and is very buttery. But actually, John McEntire plays a lot less drums in Tortoise now. He does more keyboard stuff [we heard he "borrowed", to put it euphemistically, all the Tortoise keyboards from Oberlin]. So, in The Sea And Cake he really does his stuff. His drumming is really different in The Sea And Cake than in Tortoise. In The Sea And Cake he's much flashier or something. Sometimes he overplays and pisses me off. Usually we're pretty good. No one tells him (what to play)... he just gets there. Usually, when he's just learning a tune or figuring out what to play, that's when he plays all over the place. And then, he gradually hones it down, but his licks are really, really specific. He'll play it the same tonight, almost. It was pretty weird at some soundcheck... John McEntire wasn't there so we had John 'Machine', or Herndon, that's his old whatever (name), play the drums with us and he played them, John's parts, almost identically. It was fucking weird as shit. It was creepy."

This tour was only their second time out to California so they took the scenic route down from the Northwest, the whole sightseeing thing. "It was really awesome. The first time I was here was last September and I liked it then too, but just coming in from this side into San Francisco, I have a totally different impression. This (area) seems more like what I expected [as compared to the Mission where they played the Kilowatt]. I think it's totally hot (even though it's all touristy). I was like, 'Yeah man. Here I am in San Francisco.' We came over the (Golden Gate) Bridge. I'm a sucker for all that shit."

Just before this tour they were playing in Europe. "In Germany we do really well because mainly that's where our record comes out.. The year before we did more (shows) all over, but this time almost all of them were in Germany, except for two in Switzerland, couple of shows in Austria, and then we played in London. Most places were great to play though because we specifically asked to avoid the usual rock clubs if possible, so we ended up playing a lot of these sort of like state-subsidized community centers with awesome P.A.s. But they really had it set up, a lot more than... A lot of the places were like music halls, cinema, kindergarten. It was really excellent."

Playing music is the main occupation of the band members. "At this point I have to make some money (on touring) or I would have to get a job. If I'm going to be gone for three months at a time, I can't not make money. But it's working out OK that way. I work sometimes. I do this job at this museum, carpenter kind of work. Everybody who works there is in a rock band, so it's like the rock and roll museum. It's totally rinky dink [not one of the major museums in Chicago] and it's totally lax. It's pretty great."

They're going to start recording again in July. "I can't wait. That's the problem with this touring stuff. I can't come up with anything on the road." Sam is the main song initiator in the band. "Usually I come up with something. Since I have to sing, most of it starts with something I do. Then Eric, Archer and I get together and work on that. They add all their stuff, we start building it up. Then we'll get with John and further it. (John comes in later) mainly because where we'd have to practice with drums is this really awful tiny little box and he can't play drums in my apartment, so he just has to wait. We (the three) just practice quiet, sitting on my couch, to a certain point. And it's hard in this soundproof box, it's impossible to actually think in there, or even be in there for too long. So we end up working out the finer points before we go in there. But we still work on it. When the drums come along, there's still plenty of work to do. The three of us usually get together fairly regularly. But then sometimes, there's some long dry spells. I just start it. I don't think of it as I write the songs. I just sort of initiate. I suppose if I stop doing it, someone else might try something. I think it's mainly because I'm really bad at... I have no skills dealing with what someone else has done. I'll do it, but...

Archer and Eric are much better at that than I am. Responding to the initiative (?) That's not entirely true, but that's usually how it works."

Luckily, the neighbors don't freak out [like at the unfortunate Lounge Ax]. "We have a pretty good neighbor situation. For a long time, it was these junkies and they were never around and if they were, they were just trashed and wasted and didn't care. Now, these old dudes moved in.

They rehabbed the apartment below us. That was bad. But then these oldsters moved in, and I think they have the TV on so loud that they could not be fazed by a fucking tornado."

As for future band plans, Sam hopes he has no aspirations to play the Lollapalooza side stage, though "it pays a lot of money. Archer, who was in this band the Coctails (they broke up), they did it and it was like over \$1000 bucks a show and it just adds up pretty quickly. But it's hell he says. It totally sucks. But you can forget about that when you count your money."



this is my swan song wish it
could have been more copacetic
not pathetic big tom cat won't get
out of my head and i am getting
down
this is my four track got a
vision but my micro phone is
missing i don't know what to say
"now, more charm and more fender" lp/cd



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an excerpt from *Durability* by Cory Brown

Cal scratched. A tiny scab, like a dark red nonpareil, fell onto the page, undoubtedly from chaffing while shaving two days prior. No one had actually taught Cal how to shave. There was no rite of passage, young Cal standing by, watching and listening intently to his father tell through a mask of lather the secrets of the fine art of shaving. Cal had once watched Ned, his mother's second husband, shave, but it was more incidental than it was instructional. Ned could be endearing, occasionally. Cal started out by bleaching his thin teenage mustache, fending off shaving as long as he could. He was embarrassed that both he and his mother used the same box of bleach. He sort of wished that he didn't know his mother used bleach and also wished she didn't know he did. It was her idea, though, and it saved him from the unknown terrors of shaving and that foolish looking fuzz that passed for junior high school macho. After a couple of months, bleaching no longer made sense and Cal convinced Ned and his mother to buy him a Norelco. It had three circular cutting surfaces, a separate mustache and sideburn trimming mechanism on top, and a double sided brush to clean out the blades, all neatly packaged in a durable black plastic traveling case with red faux velvet lining. In those many moments of pubescent angst, when hopelessness and alienation dominated his realms of poetic reflection, Cal often wondered if the mustache and sideburn trimming mechanism could open his wrists.

He used an electric razor for years until he realized if it didn't give him as close a shave as he wanted, he should switch. He thought himself extremely hygienic, certainly more so than his peers. He was just a bit slow with this sort of thing. Once he had a conversation with his sister about deodorants and antiperspirants. "I use Mitchum, which is supposed to be extra-strong, but I still sweat like a pig." You couldn't get more male than Mitchum. "Why don't you change antiperspirants?" Tashi had asked. It was a similar inquiry that led Cal to switch from his old Norelco electric to a manual Atra plus. Cal wondered if perhaps he had some sort of brain tumor that impaired him from obvious conclusions. He could carry a line of conversation in a direction that crunched the average brow, but he could not independently come to the conclusion that he should try another brand of antiperspirant or a different razor.

He did get a much closer shave though. Possessing no expert training, he uncovered his face from the lather with an appalling lack of technique. His stubble had no consistent grain and he eventually had to shave in this unorthodox manner in order to rid his face of shadow. Cal had no idea how to rectify his follicular predicament. Should he just shave in one direction and disregard the renegade stubble in hopes that it would eventually conform to his regular shaving habits? This philosophy had failed miserably with inner city youth. Besides, in the interim, his facial hair would look like a weather map.

Then there was the bleeding. He was never so careless as to nick or slice himself, but somehow his face was sensitive enough to chafe, the blood appearing on his cheeks as if he were a chameleon slowly changing color. Without a new tactic, Cal continued his haphazard efforts at smoothing his

cheeks. It was unbearable. The pain wasn't so bad, he even got used to it. His pride was another story altogether. Shaving should be much more than a man ridding his face of hair. There was something intimate and virile about looking in the mirror at one's self shaving, bathrobe V displaying a suggestion of chest hair like some personal trophy. To be interrupted, to go to the door with one's face half covered in cream and sign for that package like a man - wow. Never fully lathered, that would be telling, revealing too much ritual. Cal upset himself whenever he thought about the subject too intently. How could he possibly approach the door with that confidence-oozing, testosterone-powered swagger when the unlathered portion of his cheeks was covered in a light layer of blood? He wanted Kirk Douglas in "Spartacus" and all he got was Vincent Price at the end of "House of Wax".

During that brief period when he and Becca were cohabiting, Cal lived in a constant state of fear that she would somehow see him bleeding like some heir to czarist Russia. They were so comfortable with one another that they could go to the bathroom with the door open and conduct a conversation. When he shaved, however, the door was shut. Never would the image solidify of Cal coming out of the bathroom, clean faced save for the dabs of residual shaving cream at his ears and sideburns, a fierce and dashing portrait of XY chromosomes, as Becca lay upon the bed..... damn it! No, he had to shave first and then shower to give his entire face a chance to coagulate!

Cal sighed as he realized that he hadn't registered the last three pages at all. He licked his finger and turned back.



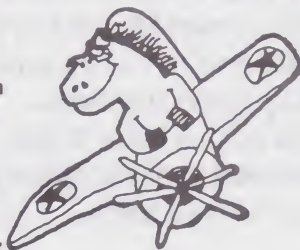


Travel, travel, travel

First off was flying to Kansas City last September to help Chris drive his newly acquired bright red Plymouth Sundance back to the Bay Area. I really had no expectations for Kansas, and my only real preconceived notion (admitting that I'd thought about it at all) was that it would be yellow (fields of grain/dry grass/whatever). I was pleasantly surprised to see lots of trees and grass, i.e. it was actually green. Well, Kansas City anyway. After driving around the town and seeing all its fountains and statues, I was actually reminded of Europe. The suburbs of Paris and Edinburgh. Of all things... Anyhow, I could see how it'd be a drag to live there, but it really was a nice place to visit. Same could be said of Denver, where we hung out a bit our first night on the road. I definitely had no mental concept of Denver (didn't even know it was a mile high) and I have to say it impressed me. Again, that would be in a really touristy way, but it was downright pretty. We happened in on some kind of Mexican dancing event and were just in time for Oktoberfest celebrations (right up Chris' alley). I think we had the fortune of seeing a dancing chicken leading a crowd. Pretty yuppified goings on, but interesting to observe. The drive through Rocky Mountain National Park with the windows down (until it got chilly near the top - they've actually got some tundra environment there or something) and the Spinanes in the speakers was really nice. Utah was like one big sand box with some mountains in the middle (don't get me wrong, it was still rather scenic) and the Great Salt Lake (which Chris had been insisting we must dip our feet into, until we got there that is) was absolutely putrid. ugh. Our last night on the road was spent in Reno, a pretty sad little city (even if it is the biggest in the world) where people who couldn't cut it in Vegas hang out. We both tried our hands at gambling for the first time, after spending a good hour or two scoping out the scene. It took me all of three minutes to lose my allotted \$10 (yeah, yeah. big money it's not) but Chris actually walked away with a profit, albeit something like \$1.50. So that was my whirlwind half the country in four days trip. Hey Chris, next time it's you, me, the Plymouth, and Yellowstone. Oh yeah, the best thing about the drive through Kansas, which is the Sunflower State, was all the wild sunflowers (which actually kept on until California). And breaking out the tape of the Son Volt advance that Mark had so kindly FedExed to me right before I left. "Dude, let the wind take your troubles away..." as Mark overheard a fellow say to another in the bathroom of the Belly Up during the Son Volt show we went to in San Diego. The biggest let down: not getting a proper view of the world's largest prairie dog.

I went to DC for a week over Thanksgiving with my cousin Sanj to visit her sister/my cousin Ja at Georgetown, where she's a junior in the School of Foreign Studies. This was definitely a pretty kick back stay as I had already done a lot of sightseeing with my 8th grade class on our class trip. Granted, that was a long time ago and I had spent most of my time buying souvenirs rather than paying attention to the historical relevance of my surroundings, but for what it was worth, I'd seen the sights. This time around, I got a little taste of campus life, downtown Georgetown, DC's poor excuse for a "Chinatown" (two blocks with a couple stores and restaurants and a disproportionately large ornate gate/post marking your entrance into it), a handmade decorative landscape kimono exhibit at the Smithsonian, Dupont Circle (the gay part of town), and megamall shopping (malls are ushering in the homogenization of the Western world). And I did manage to make it to one show. I had a choice between Rocket From the Crypt and the Pee Chees at the Black Cat or Thirty Ought Six at 9:30's Atlantis. I had missed Rocket over here because I had hung out too long at the Kilowatt to see some of the Swirlies' set (I'd never seen them before. I was only there in the first place because I had stopped by to talk to Pee and Kelly had put me on the list. That was also the first time I had seen Pee properly and they were great of course). I had left after three songs, headed over to the Great American, got to the door and the show had already been over for 15

minutes. And it was only 11:45. I had forgotten about Rocket and their short sets and no encore. I also wanted to check out the Black Cat Club since I was still lamenting the fact that I had not gone to the Working Holiday fest. But I also wanted to check out 30.06. In the end, practicality won out because I was going by myself and Ja wasn't sure about the Black Cat's neighborhood, but knew that there was a dance club across the street from the 9:30. After a long wait, 30.06 rocked my world (and even more so at the Chameleon Noise Pop show. If you ever get the chance, check out this Portland band. Pretty damned amazing, especially Ryan the drummer. Trust me.) and I was glad I had a chance to visit the club before it moved. Hometown boys My Life In Rain headlined but I didn't really get a chance to pay attention to them. I remember thinking they were good, but not terribly impressive. But I just recently came across their Grass Records release What People Say, and I'll be damned if that's not just one really good album. With the help of Geoff Turner, MLIR has made a tight rockin' piece of work and I recommend it. They also have a track on that DC Cure covers compilation. I was bummed that I was missing the Boys Life/Knapsack show there by a scant few days, but oh well. I also had pretty interesting cab drivers. On the way there was a guy from Liberia who had driven in a lot of the metropolitan areas on the east coast, and the way back, a guy from Cambodia who had a Ph.D. in philosophy, had studied for a few years in India, and did a daily Voice of America show. You never know what you'll learn talking to a cabbie. On the way back home, we got held up for quite a while in Chicago due to a snowstorm. How do people deal with these things?



george and our cover boy



Next up was our one week trip to Hong Kong in January. My stepmom, George and I headed out to HK in the middle of the week. Air travel to Asia is not a fun thing (thankfully there are direct flights to HK. my co-worker was telling me how hellish it is to get to India). At least the in-flight entertainment was decent. Finally got to see The Usual Suspects and reluctantly watched Water World, which is ok as far as action flicks go, but so illogical (with all that water around, why is everyone so dirty?) and with unsympathetic protagonists. Sandwiched between those was this weird Cantonese movie that was part comedy, part religious allegory, part social commentary. They make the oddest movies over there. After transferring in Taiwan, we arrived in HK at

night. I remembered how it was coming out through the automatic doors 12 years ago and having all those people looking anxiously to see if you're the ones they've been waiting for, and looking out over those faces for our biological grandfather whom we'd never met before. The layout was still the same, but this time I was taller and spotted Dad at the end of the ramp pretty immediately. It's weird thinking that that's where he lives now, and that he should even be driving the company's minivan, with its right-sided steering, was so foreign to me. The last time we (George and I) were in HK, we had come with our dad and only stayed a couple days before we headed over to Taiwan. I really didn't remember much about the city, more about specifics like aspects of our hotel room, our grandfather's small apartment, sitting with him in the airport lounge before we left. Because of family politics (he is my mother's father and this trip was dad family-funded, and my stepmother has a strong distaste for anything remotely related to my mother), I didn't even consider trying to arrange a meeting with him. I do wonder how he's doing, but he has not exactly played a significant role in our lives, so it wasn't too big a deal. My parents' are renting a house in a gated community in HK's New Territory. It's about a 20-30 minute drive out of HK proper (when the traffic's good) and about a 45 minute ride on public transport (which is pretty damn cheap over there, compared to the Bay Area's ever increasing fares, which certainly are justified, but don't exactly serve as an incentive for people to leave their cars). Something I noticed about their house is that there are quite a few pictures of my dad and my stepmom, but not a single one of us. I think it's because my stepmom never felt like she had her own home (she married into our pre-made family and ten year-old house) and this move gave them the opportunity to pretend like it's something of their own creation. I was a little hurt but wasn't going to bring it up. Anyhow, I got a much better look at HK this time, considering the 2 hours a day spent on the train that eventually connects with the subway system closer in to the city. One day we took a bus halfway around the island, looked around, rode back, took a boat to Lantau Island (one of the larger surrounding islands, an hour ride each way), took a bus up to a Buddhist temple that sports the largest outside sitting Buddha in the world (it was HUGE!), ate a hurried dinner in their dining hall, and finally headed home. When not eating or sightseeing when on the island, I was quite engaged in stationery and trinket ogling. Far removed from my days of Sanrio store visits and other such cutesy stuff, I found myself inexplicably entranced by the shelves of mostly Japanese paper, keychains, pouches, and paraphernalia decorated by funny characters and gibberish English.. One of my favorites was Mr. Friendly. I also almost bought a Little Prince watch. I loved the French 50 franc bill, and was on the verge of plunking down \$45 for a kids watch. Luckily I held back and after further self-debate (and seeing an advertising billboard for the collection in a subway station), realized the commodification of The Little Prince is an adultery of all that the book meant to me. It's sad how the trivial forms the base of my moral dilemmas.

As for the HK area, it was really quite cosmopolitan. I guess it figures since it has been under British rule and is a big hub of business, but I was a little surprised all the same. Of course, there was a very conspicuous language barrier. Cantonese and Mandarin sound similar enough when you know what they're supposed to be saying and they're speaking slowly, but when it's spoken at regular clip (which is pretty much always), Cantonese sounds just as foreign to me as Swahili. I'm pretty sure I could get by with my Mandarin in Taiwan, but it didn't do me any good in HK. Nor did it serve me when we went to China, because my father, and most other industrial types, work in southern China, the province of Guangdong (Canton), where, of course, they speak Cantonese. I know it sounds stupid, but I used to think of Mandarin speakers as Chinese and Cantonese speakers as Cantonese (i.e. not Chinese). But then I never used to think of East Indians as Asian either. The problem was that I used to think that Cantonese people came solely from Hong Kong, which made them not Chinese in my mind. See, that's where ignorance can lead you astray. I guess

we Mandarin speakers are pretty elitist, calling Cantonese a peasant language. Frankly, it's just a lot harsher on the ears.



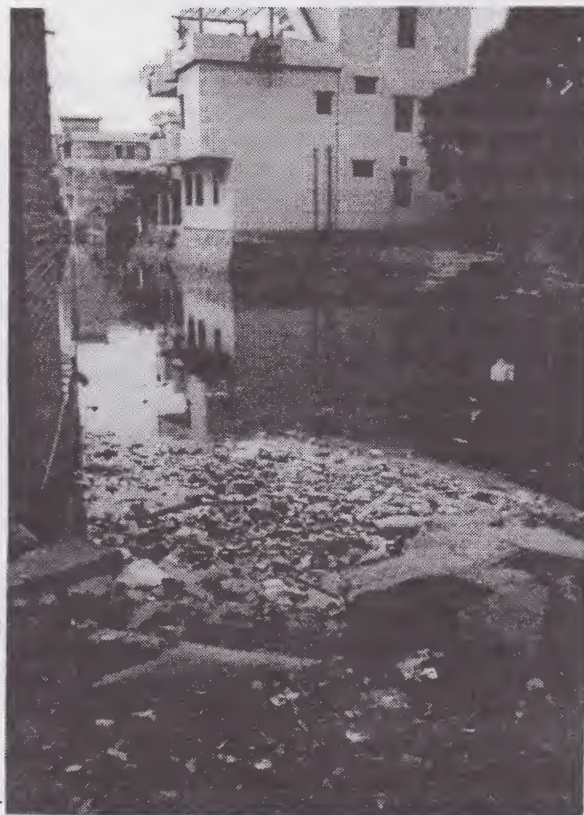
europa? nope. the yuanchang hotel, dongguan

My dad's company arranged for our visas and we took the train to the border station. As you cross the border, which is walking across this skywalk at the station, there is a huge electronic billboard (on the China side of course) which counts down the days to when HK reverts to Chinese control. Real subtle. Didn't have much trouble getting through the border, just had to wait in line a while. My dad's company had a shuttle waiting there to take people to the plant in Dongguan, which is about an hour's drive away from the border. As we crossed the crowded parking lot trying to find the shuttle, this little boy who didn't really speak honed in on us right away and started following us, trying to get money or food. If you thought panhandling in Berkeley or SF was bad, this was on par or even worse than the gypsies in Europe. It's hard to turn away a child, but we were told to ignore him. He was persistent, tugging on George's sleeve, and then tried to force his way onto the bus. It was frightening and sad. Not an auspicious start to our trip. We encountered one other like him later that evening going to dinner. It even seemed like it was the same kid. On the drive to Dongguan, I found my first look at China to be rather depressing. You could tell there was lots of growth taking place, but the area did not seem well-suited for it. City centers held new skyscrapers and new roads were being sprawled across the land between them, but the surrounds were rural and the people not particularly cut out for high-rise living. I saw small mountains with half their sides gouged out and a huge open dump. I think that during this period of unprecedented industrial growth, China has the opportunity to avoid a lot of the mistakes that the US and other western countries have made in over-expansion and imprudent use of resources. Basically, they shouldn't follow our model of development. But, that's easy for me to say from my decent urban home, typing on my computer from my fairly comfortable lifestyle. Is it fair for me to say you really don't want what I already have? Still, I can't shake the feeling that China, and probably many of the other less-developed/"third world" countries, just aren't suited to Western style development. It's unnatural. It not only leads to more disparity between the have and have-nots, but it railroads a culture as well. I despair for the day the whole world drinks Coke and smokes Marlboro's and watches Wheel of Fortune. Anyhow, I was feeling pretty apprehensive about seeing where my dad worked because I'd learned about labor exploitation and unchecked industrial practices in economic zones and was fearful that my dad was participating in that. What I saw was not at all as horrid as what I expected, but then again, we weren't shown the actual factory part or the interior of the workers' dorms. If I claim ignorance, can my conscience be free?

Ironically enough, I have never felt like more of a foreigner than I did in China. Granted, my family is from a more northern province, we dress



polluted water, dongguan



pretty differently and are obviously tourists, I have always thought of myself as Chinese. For the first time, other Chinese people, and lots of them, looked at me as if I were something else. The looks we got when walking on the street made me feel conspicuously different. A waitress said I didn't seem Chinese, and I was actually a little offended. She thought I was Thai. I guess my cousin Ja gets that a lot when she travels (she's been mistaken for Mexican and Japanese), but no one had ever said that to me. Sure, Caucasians have asked me what I was, but that's different - they're not really tuned into the differences between Asian ethnicities. This was coming from one of my own. It made me painfully aware that I don't fit in what's supposed to be my "homeland", kind of the same way I feel when I'm the only Asian at a gas station or restaurant in Podunk Nowhere, USA. It's wimpy and a cop out, and ultimately my own neurosis, but that's why I like living in the Bay Area. I don't like feeling like a freak.

I had planned to go to San Diego ever since Southwest offered those \$19 fares. Problem was, I had to randomly pick a date (restricted to traveling on Tuesday, Wednesday or Saturday) months in advance (it was November or something). I wanted to go down to visit Elena and Mark, and as it turned out, as March approached, the weekend I chose was the weekend of SXSW. Mark and Nancy were going to Austin and Mark said I couldn't go to San Diego without seeing them, which was pretty true. Since my low fare had expired, I just changed it to a Thursday night to Sunday night trip the following weekend. It ended up being a good choice since Elena had signed up for the GMAT, which was also SXSW weekend. My revised visit did end up coinciding with Mark's dad, Wayne, hitting town though. Wayne is a senior political writer for the Boston Globe and was in California to cover the primary. I went to the Transworld offices in Oceanside to take a peek at what Mark's working conditions were like and ended up totally scavenging his Warp music stash and setting a bad example for his officemate, former fluf-or Jonny Donhowe. Wayne came over and we went to this cool burrito place for lunch. Wayne gave me a lift back to the apartment and I decided to go for a walk along the beach and do some reading. Not a minute after I'd crossed the street to the boardwalk was I approached by a guy who started walking with me and making conversation. He seemed nice enough and I figured it wouldn't hurt to be civil. If I was being my usual self, I

development, dongguan



probably would have pretended not to hear him and just kept on walking, looking the other way. But what is the harm in being open to people? As a female by myself in an unfamiliar place, I think I have more grounds for being paranoid, but if there's one thing I've learned from watching Mark it's that it's ok to be nice to people you don't know. It's not that Mark is super friendly all the time, but I think he gives people the benefit of the doubt a lot more than I do. Of course, after having a decent 1.5 hour-long conversation with him, he confirmed my apprehension by asking for my number. I didn't see why he couldn't have just left it at a pleasant meeting, like my European travel encounters. Because guys are scum? hmmm... Anyhow, Mark made a great dinner for us and since we had a 10k walkathon for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society the next morning at 8, Wayne opted not to go to Son Volt with us. Nancy had seen them in Austin and I think was Jay Farrar-ed out by Mark. We got there in the middle of Blue Mountain's set. They were pretty good, and Son Volt didn't disappoint. There was a fair share of Tupelo songs (which kicked ass) and a few covers I had no clue about. The crowd at the venue was another story. I'm sad to say one of the things that can truly incense me to near violence is people who talk loudly while a band I'm trying to pay attention to (and deserves their attention) is playing. I was feeling ready to take it outside with this group of rowdy drunk women that were behind us. As we walked up the stairs to the apartment, we remembered about the comet Hayutake. We really didn't see anything comet-like, but I saw a small fuzzy blob that I thought could've been it. Turns out I was right, but I'm bitterly disappointed that I didn't get around to getting a better look at it. George and I tried using dad's telescope at home (which has just been sitting around accumulating years of dust) but couldn't figure out how to work it. Well, hopefully I'll get to take a good look at next year's comet Hale-Bopp that's shaping up to be pretty spectacular. And I have gotten to see a couple nice pictures in the hallways at NASA.

Not having exercised regularly in years, the next day's 10k walk was a tad brutal on me. Mostly my knees and ankles. I probably hadn't worn those tennis shoes since high school P.E. But it was for a good cause and it turned out to be quite a beautiful day to be walking along the ocean. Elena came to pick me up and we had lunch, then headed back to her house in Del Mar. I was somewhat excited when we drove through Encinitas and I saw exactly where the Heavy Vegetable folk live (used to live?) above Sound Asylum, down the street a bit

from Lou's, just as they had described it when I interviewed them. Unfortunately they've broken up, but Elea and Rob are in a band called Thingy and they're recording soon (already have?) with Andee (Pee, A Minor Forest) drumming. Anyhow, it was cool to get a better sense of where Elena's life was taking place and to see her new niece. Oh so cute! And congratulations to Elena on her grad school acceptance! I was a little sad about being a vegan when I saw her mom testing her new pastry squeezer gadget, as she was making awfully tasty looking cookies. But hey, that's the choice I made. We went and saw Fargo at this huge new cineplex. The good thing I could say about it was that the theater was well-designed with a pretty steep incline (compared to most theaters) that helped minimize the tall person in front of you problem, and these great wide seats with movable armrests. I'm sure it's a great place for a date. The next day we hung out in Balboa Park for a little bit, after finally finding parking, then went to that new theater in Hillcrest (that structure with the obtrusive colors) and ate at the veggie restaurant in that center. Pretty good though a little pricey. Yeah, the San Diego area is about as suburban sprawl hell as the South Bay, but in a nicer setting. They've got the ocean and hills and all those brilliant wildflowers growing along the freeway. I was especially awed by those random splotches of bright purple. Who told me I had Lady Bird Johnson to thank for that?

The Wednesday after I got back from San Diego, I was set to go to Portland. I shared a ride with Chi-hui and we both went to hang with our respective friends Chris. The weather was really wacky on the drive up and I got hit with all of a sudden pouring rain that fogged up the windshield in less than a minute so that I couldn't see, and then past the border, it started snowing. It was kind of neat at first as the flakes flew at you, but before long, I couldn't see where I was going again. Being a Santa Clara Valley baby and never having had to drive through snow, I kind of freaked. We pulled over and Washington resident Chi-hui took the wheel, though he almost got hit by a truck as I had forgotten to unlock the door. We finally reached Portland after one in the morning. Chris was still in the midst of researching/updating Portland for the Berkeley Guides (co-editor of 1996's Germany and Austria, he's writing up half of Oregon for next year's Northwest guide) so he had saved some of the potentially fun stuff for my visit. We visited the local Fred Meyer (where Chris has spotted Rebecca Gates a number of times) and had brunch at the ParaDoX cafe, which served some yummy stuff, and where Chris pointed out Pete Krebs at one of the booths. At the time I just nodded, not remembering who exactly Pete Krebs was. But of course, Pete Krebs, he of Hazel and solo album fame. We went to the Parks and Rec. office downtown to get info on this huge park they have up there (forgot the name) that we were going to check out, but the nice receptionist told us it wasn't the greatest time to go because some roads had been blocked by mudslides. Oh well, there was still Sauvie Island, which Chris had heard was really great and this time of year had tulips that you could go cut. We stopped by the posh used clothing store Jen Softie works at to say hi and were given complicated (but accurate) directions on how to get there by a customer. Low on gas in the first place, we ended up going the wrong way around the island (we were supposed to check out the beaches, but there were none in sight), which is quite a large piece of land sticking into the Willamette and just a 10 minute drive out of the city. Everything there is U-Cut (depending on the time of year - Christmas Trees, pumpkins, berries, etc.), and what I was picturing to be fields of tulips ended up being about 3 rows of daffodils. Chris was bitterly disappointed about the lack of interest-value (most of what we saw was bare agricultural land), but I thought the island was pretty nice, having stopped at a bird watching spot and seeing the most wild geese I've ever seen in one spot. After getting some gas and checking out the Museum of Forestry (or whatever it was called. Cynthia, I thought of you), we stopped at Reading Frenzy to drop off some zines. Chris had been incredibly prolific and a month after starting his first zine, Frolic, already had a snazzy new issue out. I, of course, was still hocking #8. I guess the woman who runs it had just moved

from her old SE location to downtown. The air was thick with beer a'brewin as we walked towards RF, which is across the street from that big book store (forgotten the name, but it's where Chris' housemate Camille works) and around the corner from Umbra Penumbra.. She was super nice and has a neat store. For dinner we checked out this Ethiopian place that was a few tables combined with a convenience store and spice manufacturing facility. It was an interesting experience.

That night we went to EJ's to see Butterglory. The next night they'd be playing in SF with the Wedding Present, but alas, I would not be there. Actually, I don't think I would've gone anyways, but I'm glad I got to see Butterglory. They were good, though they started the set off with the song off their new album that really annoys me, "On Button On". Anyhow, their material really comes across well live and they're pretty nice too. Chris saw someone who looked like Steve Malkmus, but we wrote it off. Later we found out that S.M. is considering relocating to PDX and I was sad that I hadn't made Chris point him out to me. He did point out a New Bad Thing to me (they were on the cover of the Rocket that week), but I wasn't sure who it was (the only guy I was sure knew George was Luke, who it turned out to be), so I didn't approach him. The next night was a party/show at Chris and Camille's friend Jonathan's house. Chris was going to play with Jonathan backing him up on his Kansas City bargain treasure, a little Starmaker drum set. Good thing I forgot to bring up my extra bass pedal I was going to lend him because it probably would've gone straight through the bass drum "head". The day before we had seen a marquee with Lovenotes and Lithium on it. That was a real blast from the past (they were a SF band George had been in contact with, but I hadn't heard anything about them in years) and I thought it was weird that they should be touring during my visit. It turned out they were playing that party and when I walked in the door, I saw three guys standing in the corner with the Lovenotes and Lithium shirt that George still wears every now and then. I didn't remember what they sounded like, but it was nice to have some former Bay Areans (they'd relocated to Portland) to talk to. The trip of the evening was this band called Pirate Jenny that sang pirate songs. It was the most bizarre concept for a band I'd ever heard of. And, they were actually pretty good. This dorky multi-instrumentalist played xylo(vibra?)phone, this weird flute thing, and sang crazy. The next coolest was an Irish/Celtic band called Black Bush that played awesome folk music. It was cool to see a scene like that. I recognized a few people from the Butterglory show, including the girl in the opening act, Transparent Thing, which was good, if not exactly enthralling. We left at noon the next day. But not before Chris and I watched a pretty wacky Saturday morning cartoon with these weird bugs. What do they think kids want these days? Well, I'm glad I got to visit Chris and check out his new surrounds. I can see why he's taken such a liking to Portland. It seems like a very laid back place. If only I drank coffee and liked beer...



sauvie island

A night, more like afternoon, out at the movies



I thought for sure I'd have more time to go to the movies, or at least rent them, now that I was working and living in a deadbeat town. But I had tv, and now that I've pretty much kicked it, I still don't really have the time. I could go after work, but who wants to pay \$7 for a movie?! I think it's pretty ridiculous how movie prices have just gone up and up. Is it only inflation? Hey, remember when an audio cassette used to cost \$6.98 standard? Anyhow, I haven't even stepped into a rental place yet (i.e. Blockbuster in these necks) and it's been almost a year already.

Movies I've seen in the theater since July ('95): *Wild Reeds* [fuzzy (literally) French memories of budding (homo)sexuality and the Algerian war. pretty good performances, decent plot, cute actors, bits of humor, irony. your typical foreign flick, but more visually nauseating than most], *Unstrung Heroes* [quirky little underrated film. Directed by Diane Keaton. Great performance by the main kid who played that obsessive-compulsive boy who got a lobotomy on Chicago Hope. Andie MacDowell is a little annoying, but Kramer (Michael Richards) and the guy who plays his brother are both really good. Great soundtrack too], *Theramin* [documentary on Leon Theramin that's interesting, but leaves big gaps. He lead a fascinating life, but I felt like the film spent more time on peripherals (which were interesting - like Brian Wilson the freak - and illustrative, but they could've stopped once we got the idea - like movie clips that used a theramin for effect) than telling his story], *Golden Eye* [years too late for Pierce and weak plot, but otherwise as entertaining as a Bond film should be. went with the 'rents - they paid], *Toy Story* [imaginative and cute, though the humans are thoroughly ugly (on purpose?) A real winner], *Home For The Holidays* [another overlooked, directed by an actor (Jodie Foster) movie. really solid performances by the ensemble cast, especially Cynthia Stevenson (Hope of Hope and Gloria), in this tale of holiday family angst. quite nice. missed the beginning because we snuck in after *Toy Story*], *City Of Lost Children* [visually creative, beautifully acted, twisted. Girl who plays Miette is lovely, Ron Perlman does a surprisingly good job, and the actor who was the protagonist in *Delicatessen* is great several times over], *Sense And Sensibility* [damn charming. Kate Winslet, who wowed in *Heavenly Creatures*, one-ups herself. She is a great actress. Ang Lee did a good directing job, and Emma is always engaging. fluff, but I cried a lot], *Shanghai Triad* [depressing tale of greed and corruption told from the point of view of a young servant boy. Gong Li's always good. Pretty shoddy



translation job though. makes me wonder what I'm missing when I have to depend of subtitles], *Fargo* [excellent outing by the Cohen bros. Dark comedy at its best. That guy who was the head doctor on E.R. does a really impressive turn as the groveling car salesman. Didn't see the point of the messed up Asian guy, but I could be too sensitive. Those Minnesotan accents are a hoot! Darn tootin'], *Angels and Insects* [unfocused expansion on a short story that I wouldn't mind reading. Not fully realized (or too subtle for me to pick up on?) paralleling of human and insect society. A small move towards frontal nudity equality that's overrated. One flaccid penis sticking out of britches does not exactly make up for the many frontal shots of Patsy Kensit (funny thing is those shots aren't even provocative. I wonder if that was on purpose or if it was just me). Well, at least it's better in that department than *The Lover*, which managed to twist and shadow that guys body so that the billion times you see them naked, you never see any of his "goods", but she gets to bare all. bollocks], *Bottle Rocket* [an endearing film that is sappy and a bit one-dimensional, but funny and heartfelt in character and delivery. I was quite taken by lead sensitive guy Anthony. Friend (real life brother) Dignity is over the top, but ultimately sympathetic. The robbery scenes are quite a riot], *Cemetery Man* [oh man, Rupert Everett makes me shake in my socks. What a man! And for the guys, there's the huge-breasted Italian model who pops up repeatedly. Jon says she has the most beautiful lips he's ever seen. As for the movie itself, pretty crazy and ultimately confusing plot involving a cemetery where the dead come back. Darkly humorous and well acted. The version I saw was dubbed in English, which I guess wasn't too bad since it didn't seem too weird, but it would have been better to hear the actors in their original tongue], *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* [if I had known this was going to show on Frontline only a month later, I wouldn't have made the effort to see it in the theater. A pretty good overview of what went down in Tienanmen Square in April-June 1989, as well as interesting historical background. Annoyingly, there is English translation imposed on the interviews rather than subtitles. Some bits I could catch were not conveyed that well by the translator. I think the thing to keep in mind is that all documentarians go in with an objective. No matter how open-minded they plan to be, their agenda always colors a film because ultimately they decide what is included and how it's presented. Also, hindsight can really distance a person from events in their past. It is easy to be critical. The truth is that many innocent people were injured or lost their lives. No matter what conflicts were happening within the student movement, the truth of violence can't be denied.], *Cold Comfort Farm* [full of hilarity at the expense of the ridiculous. Comely Kate Beckinsale is much more tolerable here than as the crybaby of *Much Ado*. There is a knee-slapping scene where a parting is played out to the *Gone With The Wind* score. Ab Fab-er Joanna Lumley does a nice turn as a socialite and Ian McKellen and his church of quivering followers are a hoot. Enjoyable, except for the senseless final ending] Movies I want to see: *Flirting With Disaster*, *Young Poisoner's Handbook*, *Ghost In The Shell*, *Frisk*, *Horseman On The Roof*, *Chungking Express*, *Antonio's Line*, *The Flower Of My Secret*, *Il Postino*, *French Twist*, *Restoration*, *Brineandy*, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, *James and the Giant Peach*, too numerous to go on

The Pac Bell guy rules

It was George who first brought it to my attention that it was Whit Stillman actor Chris Eigeman who was portraying the oddball dry-witted Pacific Bell spokesperson in those tv ads. I knew the guy looked familiar, but didn't really think about it. I guess it was George's more recent viewing of *Barcelona* (which I still haven't seen) which heightened the recognition factor. Now, I know someone's coming up with these bizarre situations and writing his droll commentaries, but it takes the right person to pull it off. I think those Pac Bell commercials are some of the funniest ads on tv and radio. I think I have this serious attraction to deadpan deliveries. That's definitely part of David Duchovny's appeal to me. Besides the fact that he's dorkily handsome, he has this offbeat sense of humor and dry articulation (in the 2 late night interviews I've seen him do) that makes him so damn appealing. I'll stop slobbering now.



Reading

So, as I had promised myself when I graduated (and on many previous occasions), I actually started reading again for the first time since high school. That would be reading for pleasure. I used to read rather voraciously when I was in grade school (sometimes it wasn't quality, but it wasn't tv) and then tapered off as I puttered through my high school years. Reading outside of school work (which I didn't do particularly diligently either) practically dropped off for me during my college years (I don't think the *Chronicle* and glancing through music/entertainment magazines counts). There's definitely something to be said for being forced to take a college English course (I AP'd out of the requirement) - I think it probably keeps your brain critical and receptive to literature. It didn't help things that I'd become one of those readers who takes forever to get through something because I read, get distracted or skim a little, get paranoid at having missed something so start reading again at a paragraph I know I've read already. Kind of the two steps forward one and a half steps back approach.

Summer before my junior year, I read *Jurassic Park* and *Silence of the Lambs* (real high brow literary classics for you there) and Peter Shaffer's play *Equus*. The summer after, I managed to down a couple

Herman Hesse books and Spalding Gray's *Swimming To Cambodia* (not exactly rough going). In the spring, I read Tony's *Barrel Fever*. Not a great record. Last summer, I took two books to Europe with me: Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (which was George's but I think it may have been stolen along with a multitude of Tony's belongings when he was moving into his new apartment. A long and tragic story) and part of my graduation present from Mark, *Blue Highways*, by William Least Heat-Moon. I have to admit I'm still working on the latter (sorry Mark!), but it kind of lends itself to installment reading.

After lugging it all the way to Europe, I found that I really didn't have much time to read it. I suspect that's what all the train and plane time was for, but I could never drag myself away from looking out the window. I mean, this was country that I'd never seen before and who knew when I'd ever see it again? Ok, my lame excuse for that. Anyhow, as I got into the mode of my working life and commuting, I started listening to NPR for the first time (really listening. When I was younger, I used to hate it when my parents would listen to that "talk radio" and beg for them to change the station to Modern Rock™. oh, how dumb I was) and Fresh Air. Actually, the first time I really paid attention to Fresh Air was on a drive up to San Francisco after work, and the interviewee was the author Nick Hornby. He and Terry were talking about music and having top 5 lists for everything and how women only wear their sexy knickers on special occasions. That was all well and good, but what really got my attention was when he addressed the subject of musical snobbery (judging people by their musical tastes) and male desire to play the role of music mentor (the guy making the mix tape for the girl to broaden her musical horizons leading to the reshaping of her musical tastes). Those things really struck a chord with me. I was amazed how much I could relate to what he was saying. So, at the risk of a rush hour accident (I remember being near Candlestick at that point), I scribbled down the author's name and the title of his book, which is *High Fidelity*. A few weeks later at Stacey's on Market (as I exchanged a two-month old FoxPro book that I never used), that book became my first recreational reading purchase for myself in many years. Ok, that's not entirely true. In England, I hunted down the manuscript of Mike Leigh's *Naked* and two of his other films (which I had first spotted in Amsterdam), but I haven't read it yet, and I bought and read *Never Mind The Bollocks*, but I had bought it as a gift for Mark, so it doesn't really count. Well, that was the first of several book purchases I made (for myself and others) in the twilight of last year. I was a bit irrational about it because I still have so many books in my possession that I have yet to read, so I've kind of swung to another extreme and decided to not buy any more books until I read all the ones I already have (that includes many of my college texts that I neglected). Of course, my resolve will probably not last forever.

In fact, Joe just highly recommended Paul Auster's *New York Trilogy* to me and I'm awfully tempted...

Books I've read recently (in chronological order):

Nick Hornby - *High Fidelity* [in the end, it turns out this book is great for going "I do that!" or "I know someone just like that!" and it's amusing, but as far as literature goes, not exactly]; Dorothy Allison - *Bastard Out Of Carolina* [rather harrowing classic of a young girl in a bad situation], Dale Peck - *Martin and John* [to be honest, it took me a while to figure out the characters weren't consistent. I had randomly found this book when sitting in front of the 'P' shelf while waiting for friends in City Lights. Two years later, I finally decided to buy it and read it proper. My first gay fiction, though I guess *Barrel Fever* counts. A little melodramatic but otherwise a very good read], Roald Dahl - *My Uncle Oswald* [funny, but ultimately reflects Roald's misogyny], Haruki Murakami - *The Elephant Vanishes* [my first taste of Japanese literature. As weird as their other media. A great book of slightly tweaked short stories], Sherwood Anderson - *Winesburg, Ohio* [First published in 1919, I really liked the character descriptions in this book, each chapter relating to the story of a different towns person with the growth of a boy as the incidental thread through the stories. I did not find the main protagonist particularly sympathetic, but I was affected by some of the book's simple messages about life.], Kenzaburo Oe - *A Personal Matter* [Nobel Prize winner's story about responsibility (loosely based on his own experience with having a developmentally disabled child, I think). Weak unnecessary ending, but the rest is pretty powerful as a very realistic personal dilemma.], Don DeLillo - *White Noise* [I finally got around to reading this. Really good and biting social commentary/parody of modern life and academia, but kind of degenerates into silliness 2/3 way through], Haruki Murakami - *A Wild Sheep Chase* [a layman detective story with surreal elements. Pretty interesting and kind of dark], Shawn Wong - *American Kaos* [crap. I saw it at the library and remembered Ja had asked me if I had read it. It is supposed to be a very in tune and true to life story about the trials and tribulations of this Chinese American man and his relationship with this younger Japanese hapa woman. It seems more like Asian male wet dream to me. A few things ring true, but as a book that's supposed to be a realistic reflection of an Asian American generation... I don't think so.], Dale Peck - *The Law of Enclosures* [his second novel focuses on the parents of *Martin and John*'s John. They have the same names anyhow. It's the story of a troubled marriage that shoots back and forth between the present and their earlier years. In the middle however, there is a section that is supposed to be the about the author's life. Being the gullible person I am, I find

it hard to discern reality from fiction, but I can only figure it's fiction, as he also blurs the lines at the end of *Martin and John*. This book is a little far-fetched but very well-written.] (thanks to Tony, Julie, Jeff, Chi-hui and George for the gifts, loans, and recommendations)



No more tv?! (3/96)

Well, I'm not the type to go cold turkey, but for my own good, I'm trying to cut down considerably. I could easily watch a few hours of tv at least five nights out of the week (usually avoiding Tuesdays and Saturdays) and was doing pretty much that. But I had to make a stand if I ever expected to accomplish anything (like writing for zum, and during NBC's Thursday night Must-See TV of all things). As much as I love quality programming (Monday night's *Murphy Brown*, *High Society*, and *Chicago Hope*; Wednesday night's *Ellen* and *The Drew Carey Show*; Thursday night's line-up; Sunday's *Simpsons* and *Cybill*. Only imagine if I had cable!), I've decided to limit my watching to the following shows: Friday's *X-files* and *Homicide* (quite possibly THE best show on network tv), Saturday morning's *The Tick*, and (as much as I hate to admit my dedication to this show) Wednesday's *Party of Five*. It's been two weeks so far and I've managed to not watch at any other times, and believe me, I've been mighty tempted. I'm expecting it will only get easier with time. Now that I'm at home, and especially when I'm home alone, watching tv is not exactly the social bonding experience it was during college. What can be more pathetic than a 22-year old, in the prime of life, slumped on the couch by herself, drawn into her fourth or fifth hour of television? Ok, I can think of a few things, but admittedly, it's pretty bad.



Fight the Right

On Sunday April 14th, over 600 groups with agendas spanning political, labor, social, professional, civil rights got together to march from Fort Mason down Marina Boulevard to Crissy Field. They did it to visually demonstrate the force against the conservative right and to launch the campaign to raise voter consciousness about November's anti-affirmative action initiative, deceptively called the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI). This was my first political rally and march of such grand proportions (US Park Service estimated 13,000; the organizers estimated 50-60,000). At first I was excited to see so many people had come out to make a stand, but as the day wore on, I became a little more jaded. The ridiculous sight of people selling limited commemorative t-shirts of the march near the Ferry Building (where city buses were capitalizing on the event and we ended up

getting a ride from a free independent school bus being run by women), was overshadowed by people soliciting money as the march approached the Presidio. I was most taken aback when Jesse Jackson, not five minutes into what he had to say, asked everyone to contribute money. It hadn't fully dawned on me until I got there that the rally and march were being orchestrated by NOW (National Organization of Women). I know they have an annual national rally, and they chose San Francisco/California because of CCRI, but I didn't expect it to be predominantly a large-scale fundraiser. Maybe I'm too naive. George told me about the ridiculous amounts of money they were paying people to flyer for the event.



There was a huge stage set up at Crissy Field with a press bleacher and guarded backstage. Besides that, there were a slew of food vendors taking advantage of the fact that there were no resources nearby. I felt like the reason people had come out was becoming increasingly trivialized. The speakers did nothing to assuage my fears. Nobody said anything of real importance. I know they all meant well, but they didn't teach or inspire. Maybe if they hadn't lined up so many speakers, somebody could've taken the time to say something meaningful. They reduced things to good guy - cheer, bad guy - boo. I forget who said it, but they faulted the conservative right for being "mean". Sure they are, but are we in grade school? Are these the terms of our conflict? "Mean"?! I could hardly believe it. Actress Melanie Mayron (thirtysomething) wins the "Most Daft" award. Her stilted-delivery example of being active and doing something was throwing a small vote-for-Barbara Boxer party two days before the election a few years back. I'm glad it made *her* feel good. The only person I was moved by was the woman who had just testified in DC about late-term abortions. Her story and why she felt from personal experience that it should not be outlawed actually made me cry. Listening to her reinforced how important the right to choose and have autonomy over your own body is. The worst feeling though was the realization that they had picked SF because they knew people would show. Even though

conservatives run amok, SF/East Bay is still a haven for the liberals at heart. What we do here is a far cry from representative of what the rest of the state feels. Despite this sobering experience, I still hold out hope that people will come to realize that their fellow human beings need and deserve their support and respect. In no way do I think affirmative action as it stands now is a perfect system, but I do believe the idea behind it (to treat people equally by helping those who have been disadvantaged) is completely valid and blindly eliminating it is not a good solution. You better believe I'm punching "no" when November comes.

Take Your Daughters to Work day/Take Your Daughters Home (4/25/96)

Until today, I wasn't even aware there was a national debate/furor over Take Our Daughters To Work day, which sounded like a pretty straight-forward idea to me. It's not saying boys can't go to their parents' workplace or girls can't go some other day of the year, but just to designate a day when it's kosher to have your daughter at work so she can see what kind of opportunities she might have, or to get an idea of what she doesn't want to do. To backlash by designating the same day as Take Your Daughters Home Day seems so antiquated and counterproductive to me. Don't most girls already learn that the "traditional" (though I'm sure that's mutating) role of the woman is to raise kids and run the home? Even if you don't want to see it as a career day, it could serve as a good opportunity for your child to get a better sense of what you spend your day doing, just so she can relate to you better. Companies are even doing outreach to girls who don't have parents working at their company. Helping to show girls their potential can only be a good thing.



the web sucks

As far as information retrieval, great. What bothers me is who gets access to the internet. People with the means. Granted, the opportunity is becoming more widespread, but it's not the same as anybody being able to walk into a library and look something up.

It's geared towards the privileged. Someone has to own or have access to a computer. And don't we already spend enough time looking at computer screens and tv screens? Who needs to spend more hours reading info with eyes locked on the flicking electrons? After having a computer-based job for about a year, I can attest to the fact that my eyes are ready to fall out of my head at the end of the day, not to mention how they feel after spending another few hours doing this. Call me a luddite, but I don't think this 90's information superhighway crap is as great as it's made out to be.



BOWLING ALLEY REVIEW: A Selection of Bowling Alleys I've Been To

1. National Bowling Stadium, Reno, NV

This place just opened in 1995, and it is the Taj Mahal of bowling facilities in the world. Over 120 professional-quality lanes of bowling heaven, in air-conditioned splendor with deluxe scoring tables, upholstered team seats, and a giant-screen TV capable of showing the action up close for the hundreds of fans seated in the bleachers. They don't allow open lanes (i.e. public bowling) here, as it is strictly reserved for tournaments and PBA championships and the like. Nonetheless, a sight you will never forget.

2. HILTON HOTEL Bowling Center, Reno, NV

Reno has a lot of bowling centers, but I can't imagine one much nicer than this one, a 24-hour bowling center with 50 lanes, deep inside the luxurious Reno Hilton. Go after midnight, and the games are just \$1.25. No cigarette/beer smell here either, for a change. The shoes are all in tip-top condition, most of them suede. You can go gambling in the lobby with all the money you save by bowling here in the wee morning hours.

3. ALBANY BOWL, San Pablo Ave., Albany, CA

This is my regular Tuesday night stop--the only bowling alley in the East Bay, except for one on Alameda Island. Lots o' lanes, but even more bowlers, usually. 99 cent games on Tuesday and Wednesdays until closing at 1:30 a.m., but you gotta take a number and wait for a lane. At least they have pool tables and good video games to pass the time. Frequented by Asian high-school gangster-types and college kids as well. A wide selection of balls to choose from. The staff are kind of uptight about procedures, but still this place is my home-turf.

4. STADIUM BOWL, Honolulu, Hawaii

When I was in 10th grade, I got to take after-school P.E. since I wasn't playing sports, and one quarter we took the bus to this nearby bowling alley, so-called since it's next to where the old Honolulu Stadium used to be. The bowl itself is very old, in a brick building, but the lanes must be oiled specially or something, because the scores our class got were ridiculously high for a group who didn't know what they were doing. I got my 2nd highest score here, a 145! No automatic scoring computers either, so you learned how to calculate the score like old-school bowlers. A good skill to learn, since a lot of people don't know how to keep score.

5. JAPANTOWN BOWL, Webster St., SF, CA

One of the few remaining bowling alleys in SF, a distinctively bowling-unfriendly city. This place is kind of expensive (\$2.75 with limited discounts) and pretty ordinary. There's not even quantity over quality here, since there's not that many lanes to work with. Lots of Japanese/Asian hipsters hanging out in the arcade here. Bowling shoes were nothing spectacular. Merely OK.

6. WAIALAE BOWL, Honolulu, Hawaii

I used to work in the fast food restaurant which was connected to this bowling alley, and we would get lots of elderly bowlers ordering fish sandwiches and coffee. \$2.00 per game is pretty reasonable, and the wait is not very long. Never had a really nice pair of shoes here; I just went back recently and the place was full of kids. I remember it kind of smells bad here, and that I always had bad luck bowling at this place, thus the lower rating...

7. CERRITOS CENTURY LANES, Cerritos, CA

Only went here once, maybe 9 years ago, after a family reunion at a Chinese restaurant. Still, good memories of this place persist. I broke 80 for the first time here. They had cool marble swirl colored balls that were light, for my skinny wrists at the time. Lots of video game in the lobby too, always a plus for a bowling alley.

8. PARK BOWL (ROCK'N'BOWL), Haight St., San Francisco, CA

I've never bowled here, but I would encourage you to do so quickly, since the site will be the future home of Amoeba Records' SF mega-store. On Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, this place transforms into the Rock'N'Bowl. TV screens blast music videos overhead as you try to pick up that #10 pin spare. I didn't have enough \$\$ to pay the \$6 covercharge to get in on Rock'n'Bowl night, but it's an interesting concept.: there's a flatrate covercharge to get in, but once inside, you're entitled to free open lanes, there's no per game charge. When I visited the Rock'n'Bowl, they were playing AC/DC's "Highway to Hell", and then something by Elastica, so you try to figure out what kind of music they play.

9. GRAND CENTRAL BOWL, Portland OR

Another 24 hour establishment, just across the bridge in NE Portland. This place has a cool colored-tile wall mural from the 50's reading "Let's Go Bowling" with a picture of a whole family carrying their bowling ball bags, headed towards the entrance. I was tempted to do the same, but I was kind of caught off-guard by the security guards wielding metal detectors at the entrance doing weapons check on everyone entering the place. It was after midnight, and the place was crawling with people, many of them not bowling, but hanging out with their homies. Everyone there had a natural facial expression like they wanted to kick your ass. You can imagine how that threw off my bowling game of course.

Grand Central Bowl, Portland, OR ----->
Please be sure to check in your weapons at the door, thank you so much!



Let's Go.....

ARTICLE BY A. LEW

Bo

So you've blown most of your spending money at the record store on expensive Tortoise import 12"s, it's Tuesday night, and you and your friends are just sitting around, trying to figure out something fun to do on a ramen-every-night budget. You could rent a video, but do you really want to see another stinker starring C. Thomas Howell? You could also get together for a game of Scrabble while drinking coffee and listening to Polvo, but you want to get out of the house, and plus that's been done before...

Well, put on your best pair of slacks, loosen up your wrists and elbows, call up the gang and head down to your nearest local bowling alley, where for \$4 you can rent a pair of cool shoes and get a few hours of pure unadulterated enjoyment on two greased lanes of bowling pleasure. Across the land, bowling is becoming the Tuesday night sport of choice among the young and hip (and poor), and this is one bandwagon that's just getting rolling. Here's some useless facts and unsolicited advice about the only sport where you get to wear multi-colored suede shoes...

Who invented bowling?

There's not much known about the invention of bowling, maybe because most serious researchers have better things to do. Or maybe there's not a lot of grant money for this type of investigative research. Anyway, according to one article, "archaeologists have discovered bowling balls, pins and other equipment in an Egyptian child's grave dating back to 5200 B.C." I'm guessing the "other equipment" was cool camelskin bowling shoes, because there's really no other bowling equipment I can think of beside the ball and the pins. So bowling goes way back in time, that's established.

The next mention of bowling I found was in Germany in the 2nd century A.D. I know that's a gap of 5400 years I'm leaving out, but the basic concept of the game apparently hadn't changed much since Jesus came along and did his thing. (I'm pretty sure there's no references to bowling in the Bible, but then again, I could be wrong.) Apparently Germans wagered so much on bowling games that the Church attempted to have it banned in 1443. Authorities in France enacted their own bans on bowling about this time as well. King Henry VIII of England outlawed bowling in 1541, but only for people who earned less than 1000 pounds a year. The logic was that if you were that poor, the king decided that you couldn't be wasting your money gambling on bowling.

Bowling was introduced to America by the Dutch in the 1600s, who had been playing "Dutch pins" for years in their homeland. That cool town in NY called "Bowling Green" earned its name from Dutch residents who had the good sense to endow the name on that neighborhood of the city. It seems that Americans were also infected with the bowling craze, not knowing how to bowl in moderation, and that prompted the state of Connecticut to ban bowling. Rumor has it that a peculiar loophole in the law prohibited 9 pin-bowling, but hey, if you used ten pins instead of nine, then you were in business again! Ten pin bowling became the standard. By now it became apparent that nothing could stop the bowling juggernaut from taking over the nation. The American Bowling Congress was formed in 1895 to establish rules and regulations. The people who want to legalize marijuana could draw up a pretty good blueprint from a short review of the history of bowling. [This whole section was shamelessly plagiarized from the www.icubed.com homepage and from the 6/96 issue of the Bowling World newspaper. Thanks and sorry.]



The National Bowling Stadium

Reno, NV

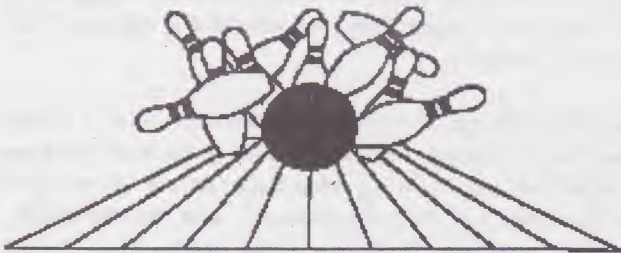
Where the elite meet
to try to beat previous
bowling feats.

twling

Tips for the Novice Bowler:

There are whole books and magazines written about this subject, but they are too assuming to come down to the level that I'm about to come down to. Obviously, bowling is about knocking down as many pins as you can, so to help you in that respect, here are some basics that work for me:

1. Find a ball that's not too heavy and has holes which fit your fingers. You'll have more control with a lighter ball. All the balls are heavy enough to knock down the pins, so don't worry about that. If there's a big gap between your palm and the ball when you stick your thumb and fingers into it, then try to find a better one with the holes spread a little farther apart. You don't want to use just your wrist and finger muscles to get the ball moving, that hurts!
2. Begin your delivery before you get to the toe line. For added oomph, get that ball swinging back in an arc as you try to release it as you approach the line. A few strides is fine. Keep your weight forward. Don't walk up to the line with your feet planted and then plan to get rid of the ball. Oh, and the lane is greasy like fried chicken, so don't cross the toe line by too much or you'll slip and fall on your butt.
3. I have a bowling acquaintance who has the most awesome fly-ball delivery I've ever seen, the guy has wrist muscles made of steel. The ball travels through the air about five feet, makes a tremendous THUD! and then



usually clips the corner pin. Rarely ever down the middle. He's sacrificing accuracy for power and bravado. Maybe it impresses the ladies or something, but a better idea would be to just sort of smoothly, comfortably, deliver the ball low to the ground, almost like sliding it across the floor towards its intended target. You'll probably get a better score.

4. Bowling scoring rewards consistency. Whatever you do, avoid rolling dumb gutterballs. Just propel that ball down the lane as close to the middle of the lane as you can, and hope for 7 or 8 pins on your first roll. Zeros will really sink your score. If you're lucky enough to pick up a strike (all 10 in the first roll!) or a spare (all 10 in 2 rolls on your turn), then remember: on your next turn, the roll will count double, so don't flub it up. Be cautious. Take advantage of your own good luck. Make your score compound.

What Bowling is About, besides knocking pins over.

Most of all, regardless of how you're scoring, bowling is about socializing with others. A little friendly competition brings out the best in people. There's a lot of time in between your turns to have a conversation, catch up with folks, reflect on why you're doing so inexplicably well when you know it's mainly luck. Bowling gives you the opportunity to experience good luck (or bad luck) in a non-important situation. If I have terrible karma at the bowl, then I can expect good things to happen the next day at work, having gotten through that already.

There's a certain stylistic element to bowling, that adds to the fun. Hey, it's a chance to get out of the house and see how your favorite outfit looks with red and blue vinyl bowling shoes. Whenever I'm at the lanes, I see people in their finest casual, and I like to do the same.

Certainly there's the matter of preserving style in one's bowling technique. A studied look of concentration. A smooth, deliberate delivery. Back leg kicking up and right arm with the high follow-through. Pins flying everywhere. Body language is in full effect at the bowl on most nights.

Plus I can't help but re-mention the two most attractive things about bowling: it's cheap! Two hours of bowling on \$1 per game night means you spent maybe \$4 for the whole night, including the \$2 shoe rental fee. And the shoes! Can anyone argue that bowling shoes are not the coolest footwear ever invented? Plus, bowling alleys are always open late, and there's one in every town.

Some Useless Facts:

- * A bowling pin must be 15" around at its widest point, 15" tall, and weigh between 3 lbs. 6 ozs. and 3 lbs. 10 ozs. It is made of wood with a thick plastic coating
- * Bowling balls are approximately 27" in circumference and 8" in diameter. The standard weight is 16 lbs.
- * The lane is 30 ft. in length.
- * The automatic pin-setting machine was not invented until the late 1940's, and then, not even used in a tournament until 1957.
- * The American Bowling Congress, the first organized bowling association in the U.S., was founded in 1895. It did not allow female members to join until 1994--99 years later!
- * It has been scientifically proven that bowling shoes are much cooler than your regular shoes.

zines

7th Street #12 #114 1144 Sonoma Ave Santa Rosa, CA 95405. I assume Eden's put out a new one recently but I haven't seen it lately, though I see her every so often. This one has an interview with fabulous Delta 72, cool bowling commentary and the personal tales of life in Santa Rosa. Half-size full of goodness.

Number Two #7 PO Box 1764 New York, NY 10009. Keith Werwa wrote all the text of this hundred odd pages newsprint zine. His writing seems to go around the subject matter, but it's the kind of sleep-deprived brilliance that makes the record review section seem like short stories or the ramblings of a funny punk rock Andy Rooney. The bands interviewed are pretty rad too, Garden Variety are the coverboys, chats with Karp, Small, Boy's Life, Dahlia Seed, Rye Coalition and others. "free in new york. \$2 in civilization" Thick and chockfull of insight, and it seems like he's in it for the long haul..

BYPASS #6 PO BOX 148 HOVE, BN3 3DQ, UK. THIS IS A ZINE THAT REVIEWS ZINES. EVER SEE THAT CARTOON IN THE EXPRESS WHERE THE GUY SAYS "THIS IS MY ZINE ABOUT ZINES THAT REVIEW OTHER ZINES"? NO? WELL, IT WAS PRETTY FUNNY. WITH OVER 500 ZINE REVIEWS (THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY, I'M NOT GONNA BOTHER COUNTING) THERE AREN'T TOO MANY HARSH WORDS, MAYBE ONE OR TWO A PAGE REALLY BRUISE. THE COOLEST THING I FOUND IS THEY REVIEWED MAYREEN FROM LUNGLEQ'S ZINE BITTERSWEET. \$4

Get Off My Wagon #4 Karp, Jeff Fuccillo, Vienna Noise Choir and Panel Donor are the big interviews in here. Sandy's been at the zine/record making gig for a couple years now, this issue comes with a flexidisc featuring Little My (sadly going downhill), Sandy Coates (good acoustic singer guy), Chixdigne (someone talking), Fibulator (I like them), Ubzub and Meghan Adkins (better acoustic singer stuff). Cut n paste graphics are kinda disconcerting but cool considering they could've gone all slick; nice red cover. \$3.50

Grundig #3 1725 SE 49 Portland, OR, 97215 half-size copied cut and paster, train-hopping tales are a big part of zine lore now. Cartoons, maps, job and crush stories make up the rest. Almost everything is hand written except the letters section.

Mindwalk #2 8875 N 82nd Lane Scottsdale, AZ quarter size blue copy, perzine from Maresa, school and scene survival. She has a video comp too.

Painter Lewis #2 PO Box 40821 Portland, OR 97240-0821 Personal zine about sibling injuries, disturbing description of assaults, cartoons and other stories. Amusing story about being wheelchair ballast in Berkeley, the only thing in here that's typed (everything else is hand written). STS is somehow involved with the kick ass Portland band the Lookers. This is 32 pages, half-size, 50 cents.

POPism! #2 1734 Carol St. Downers Grove, IL 60515 Rick Hasan does this zine, formerly known as Music For Portable Chord Organs. He's also in a band of his own we discover in #2. History of Moogs, Chris Holmes of Sabalon Glitz and Yum Yum, some jabber with Man...Or Astroman? art by Charles Long and an Andy Warhol fixation occupy most of this ish. He should have #3 out by now for about \$2.

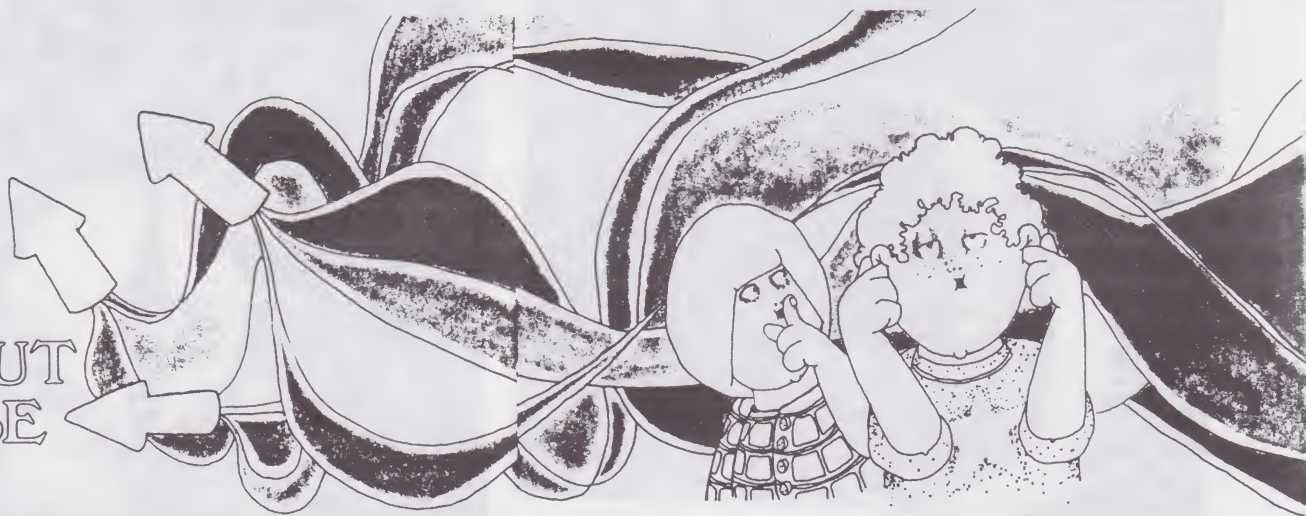
Resister #1 PO Box 1479 NY, NY 10276-1479 \$3 Evelyn McDonnell is a pro journalist/critic for alt weeklies and she edited the anthology "Rock She Wrote." A little too much poetry in here for my tastes, but rad layouts and graphics, a very strong critical vision forces you to pay attention. Novel excerpt by Lynn Breedlove, Slim Moon/Jean Smith interview, report from the Beijing U.N. Women's Conference, fiction like the hilarious "Slack Like Me", film and TV critiques and, um, tampon reviews. Around 50 pages of ink on nice paper.

SnackCake! #3 PO Box 13658 Berkeley, CA 94712 A Bay Area free paper about mostly indie rock, they've pulled off some big interviews; this issue has interviews with the Grifters, Wedding Present, Roseanne Cash, and lesser-known but worthwhile bands like For Carnation and 764-HERO. A substantial effort must go into this bi-monthly, but by its ambition, SnackCake! seems already edging out of zinedom towards a vital music scene organ. Only time will tell if it will take. This clocks in at over 60 pages on newsprint.

Speed Kills #7 PO Box 14561 Chicago, IL 60614 This zine came with a 4 song 10" with Portastatic, Flying Saucer Attack, Back Off Cupids (John Reis solo) and A Handful of Dust. I bought this not knowing what Back Off Cupids was gonna sound like, it's almost inaudible and very atmospheric, as is the FSA track; don't expect anything like Pitchfork Unplugged. The insides have extensive interviews with FSA, Unwound, essay on Futurism and car designer Virgil Exner. There's also an art section, record and zine reviews, and beautiful color covers. The \$4.50 is completely reasonable.

Verbivore #3 532 LaGuardia Place #573 New York, NY 10012-1428 \$3 I reviewed #2 in the last issue of zum, which means we must be producing zines at about the same rate. Verbivore tosses theory around in a pop culture studies way that's funny, like analyzing the variations of jumpsuits described in alien abduction narratives. The cover theme is "Conspiracy: The New Religion", while not totally reshaping how I think about conspiracy's role, the articles on Coke, Kafka and human lab rats were good reading. They lied about giving us directions to Thomas Pynchon's house though.

ALL ABOUT NOISE



reviewers: Elaine Chen, George Chen, Yvonne Chen, Anthony Lew, Tiffany Smith

764-HERO - "High School Poetry" 7" (Up)



Singer/guitarist John used to be in Hush Harbor and this 2-piece kind of sounds like H.H. without a bass. I saw them open for the Spinanes and was really impressed. My one complaint would be that the songs go on a little too long, but I guess you can never get too much of a good thing. Nicely moody and angst-ridden. (yc)

All About Chad - *Down In Front* (Big Pop, PO Box 12870, Philadelphia, PA 19108)

I heard them say "marry" a few times too many, but other than that, this is quite enjoyable guitar-edged pop. I first heard this New York band on the flexi put out by the Jelly Slide zine a few years back. I next heard them on Brilliant Records' *Something Pretty Beautiful* compilation. I think some, if not all (I have no idea what happened to my issue of the zine or the flexi, but I definitely remember "Vivien Leigh"), of those songs are on this cd. The singer has one of those boyish pop voices, which some people hate, but not me. John King of Spent makes a guest appearance on "Meet Me In The Hallway". (yc)

Archers of Loaf - *The Speed of Cattle* (Alias)

I didn't think I'd ever own this since I have most of the Loaf's records, but *The Speed Of Cattle* is better than your average singles & B-sides compilation. For one thing, there's a fair

number of Peel Session recordings and the version of "Web In Front" is the original take on the song. Why aren't these guys huge? Their songs are so well written and tuneful. The obscure lyrics of Archers' songs are always a great source of fun... (al)

Brainiac - *Hissing Prigs in Static Couture* (Touch & Go)

I didn't think this was going to be something I would like, but what do you know? This album is full of pretty rad bizarre shit. They're not kidding when they say Brainiac can't be labeled. Musically, they're kind of like Polvo meets Ministry with vocal elements ranging from the devil to Speak 'n' Spell to monchichis on acid. That's the only approximation I can articulate. This is something you have to hear for yourself. (yc)

Bugskull - *Snakland* (Scratch Records, 317A Cambie St, Vancouver, BC CANADA V6B 2N4)

Oregon band doing the kind of quirky noise thing with lots of electronic noodlings. I found "Egg Chamber" to be really disturbing/scary for some reason. There was just something uneasy and warped about it. It's probably just me. It's a good album, but not quite my cup of tea. Brendan Bell plays bass with Sone. (yc)

The Burning Sofa No. 10 - *Pinafore 7"*, *Sagittarius Excerpt EP 7"* (Krown Pocket)

One of those bands that makes band names fly through my head. On *Sagittarius...*, the predominant thought is Pavement. *Pinafore* is considerably more varied, making me think moments of Dino Jr, Crayon, Sebadoh, Henry's Dress, Ben Lee, and more. Obviously, they're not copping from these bands (except Pavement), but it helps to give an idea. And as much as Pavement comes to mind, they're not a knock-off. This band is really quite promising. (yc)

PAY 10 CENTS
TO ENTER THIS ROOM



Butterglory - *Are You Building A Temple In Heaven?* (Merge)
Are You Building... has disappointed a few people I know (complaints of it's too well produced and whatnot) but I think it's a pretty good album. With their 2nd full-length, this Visalia, CA duo turned Lawrence, KS trio is back on the track of coming into its own. Leaving behind the lo-fi Pavement soundalike of *Crumble*, Butterglory delivers a slew of richly instrumented (strings, piano, percussion and Lambchop's horn section) indie rock delights. I think Butterglory's developing nicely. (yc)

Calm - 12" (Man With Gun/Unleaded)

Folks from Mohinder and Indian Summer, but it's not what you'd think from such a genealogy. Melodic riffs and reasonable pacing make *Calm* as packagable as *Seam*, and fans have been heard to exclaim "Smashing Pumpkins!". Every time I've seen them live, they've altered their style, like that Bradbury (or some other sci-fi writer) short story about the guy who travels to the prehistoric age, steps on a butterfly, comes back and people are speaking a different language. *Calm* seem to go back and keep killing and resuscitating their idols and influences, trying to revolve and evolve their identities. Hopefully they'll get around to doing dance music someday. (gc)

Chune - *Big Hat, No Cattle* EP (Headhunter)

My enthusiasm for the great music of this band is tempered by my slight embarrassment over the somewhat weak vocals and sometimes silly lyrics. Musically, this San Diego band does its hometown proud. Trombino-recorded, this album provides all the complexities and bass-heaviness one could hope for in a S.D. band. If only the vocals were more congruent... oh well. Julie from Driptank/Chinchilla sings on "One Man Dream Machine". (yc)

Nels Cline Trio - *Ground* (Krown Pocket)

Very SST jazz core stuff, all instrumental guitar, drum bass improv. Nels was in a band called bloc and has been on Mike Watt's record. Some tracks like "Beer Bottle Collection" tweak out with feedback and rockisms. (gc)

Cold, Cold Hearts - 7" (Kill Rock Stars)

Low low fidelity suits the post Bratmobile Allison and Erin outfit well, partial production credit goes to M. Robinson. Lora Australia drums super tight usually, but the CCH pure cane shove-off is not about balance. Smith's surf plucked guitar lines will have heads a bobbin' on all but the most conservative torsos while Wolfe's playground taunts chop at the loosened moorings. (gc)



The Crabs - *Jackpot* (K)

Lovely boy and girl singing, minimal guitar and drums from Eugene, OR. Y likes them but thinks some of the lyrics cheese out, but for my non-vegan ears the sweetness overrides all else. Whilst not a totally rocked out duo, they thankfully avoid going twee. The opening song "She is a Titan" totally captivates. One of the best records we should've reviewed last year. (gc) [they have a new IPU 7", "Anything and Everything"]

Deerheart - 7" (Goldenrod, 3770 Tansy St, San Diego, CA 92121)

Intense metal punk math rock. Recorded by Albini, band from PA, pretty much a keeper. (gc)

The Dismemberment Plan - ! (De Soto, PO Box 60335, Washington, DC 20039, jwbx@aol.com)

George says this band wasn't that good live, but he did like the album. I haven't seen them so I don't know about live, but I have no problem endorsing the recorded stuff. At times almost manically energetic, this DC band mixes hometown math/art rock with a certain pop sensibility. The singer can go from lounge slickness to screaming without batting an eye. The playing is tight. Music's not too hard, not too soft. Easily worth a listen. (yc)

Dos - *Justamente Tres* (Kill Rock Stars)

Mike Watt and Kira, posthumous release of bass duets. No guitar or drums, the novelty is secondary to the beauty such instrumentation produces at the hands of two punk rock veterans. A few covers and bluesy vocals by Kira, pretty instrumentals. No distortion, no dueling, but a seeming matching of skills in parts to chart, keeping you on toes but settled in mood as well. (gc)

The Double U - *Absurd Fjord* (Communion)

Absurdly bassy gruff vocals over pretty music (says in the press thing he's a Tuvan throat singer). The Viking motif seems to be the joke of the day, music to pillage by, I suppose. The instrumental tracks are best, kinda like Thinking Fellers meet Spinal Tap on the slow ballad tip. Funny weird, not funny ha-ha. (gc)

Evil Stig - s/t

I hate to be cynical about the murder of Mia Zapata, and I've said before in these pages how rad the Gits were. However, the existence of this record prompts me to criticize the thought processes this tragedy has spawned. Evil Stig is Joan Jett and the remaining Gits playing old Gits songs. Presumably the profits from this venture are paying off a private investigator or keeping the case open. Good intentions for sure, but if we think of who might buy this record, it's gonna either be Joan Jett fans or some people who heard about the murder on TV. I like to think that Zapata's incredible vocals would at least be her legacy, but the Gits were on C/Z and probably didn't have many fans beyond the West Coast. Listening to this record, I can't help but think I'd rather listen to the originals. Stig may be a better way of publicizing through Jett's celebrity, but it almost negates Zapata's presence while invoking it. If you want to hear better and less produced versions of these songs, find a copy of *Frenching the Bully*. I should clarify, there is a song on here, "Whirlwind", which has Jett singing with prerecorded Zapata, but the whole exercise has become like a punk rock "The Crow" with the Brandon Lee scenes spliced with a stand-in. (gc)

Fifteen - *Surprise!* (Grass), Last show ever

I had the unusual experience of hearing the new Fifteen record on the same day as I saw them play what was billed as "their last show ever" before a packed house at 924 Gilman St. From listening to the record, there's no hint

that *Surprise!* is the swan song recording for a band that has become dependable for catchy pop-punk w/ a social conscience over the last 5+ years. (well, maybe except for the fact that the last song is called "The End".) Musically speaking, *Surprise!* is just a little more polished than its four predecessors. The buzzsaw, chugga chugga guitar is smoothed out, with good effect on textured songs like "My Friend II". What I

really miss from this record is the raw harmonies that were all over their amazing first album. The first thought I had upon hearing Fifteen (in 1991) was, "How can two people growling out of the back of their throats harmonize like that?" Wish there was more of that here. Anyway, the importance of a Fifteen record is in its lyrics, since they are one of the few bands who use every song to convey a message (and they haven't altered the basic sound or songwriting formula too much). As a comparison, their first record had an upbeat attitude that there wasn't any social problem that couldn't be solved without a little love and cooperation among human beings (to paraphrase "Subdivision"). Their final record has a couple of basic themes: it's one of life's basic cycles for people to hurt each other. Dreams are fragile, easily broken things. Also, for the first time, they directly address the "success" of their 1991-contemporaries (Green Day, Jawbreaker, Samiam, Rancid, etc.) - the buying-out of a whole scene - in "Middle" and "Famous": "What you call success I call excess"; "I



wanna be famous and have my face on TV/I want all my old friends to hate me"). It's a less optimistic outlook that pervades through the songs here, except on the last song, "The End II", a sped-up reworking of the Elton John-like song on their first album, a song which could even inspire hope in the clinically depressed.

With their last show ever, the mood was surprisingly upbeat (maybe because no one really believes that they'll never play again). It was great to see that many in the crowd knew the words to their songs. These are either people who pore over their records (like me) or have seen them hundreds of times. I had to go because it represented sort of the end of a period for me: when I first started going to Gilman in 1991, it was bands like Fifteen, Green Day, Jawbreaker, Monsula who packed in the place all the time. With the end of Fifteen, and the exile of several other now-major-label bands from the place, it makes me feel just a little bit older. Anyway, Jeff looked positively scholarly with thick glasses and no shirt, reading off little statements between each song and thanking people by name. To close the show, they played that old Crimpshrine standard "Inspiration" (I'm guessing this is also the last song that Crimpshrine played at their last show), an uplifting ending if there ever was one. If it seems like I've rambled way too much about this band, it's only because they deserve more appreciation than has been given to them, and I'm not talking about record sales... (al)

FlowChart - *Multi-Personality Tabletop Vacation* (Carrot Top, 2438 N. Lincoln Ave, 3rd fl., Chicago, IL 60614)

I know this is kind of old, but I feel compelled to give it a good word. Wonderfully soothing electronic explorations by this trio of New Jersey youths. Taking a definite cue from bands like Stereolab, FlowChart layers lovely vocals, slight guitars, steady drums, and neat little sounds on top of hypnotic synth and vintage organ chord repetitions. Ambient beauty with definite pop aesthetic. (yc)

Flying Nuns - *Pilot EP* (Matador)

I really dug "Servicing Man" off of the Red Hot + Bothered comp, so I was rather pleased to find this in Mark's Warp give-away pile. This Boston-based band has nothing to do with the cool NZ label nor are they tv trivia junkies. And they've been around since the late 80's! Even more surprising to me as I read the accompanying press was that their name was credited to a member of an earlier incarnation of the band back when they were at the University of Connecticut, that member being Peter Walsh, who later went on to be drummer of Hypnolovewheel. I suppose there are only a few of us out there who will appreciate that fact. I write for you. As for the music, they definitely have that Boston quality of cool but dorky (cheesy?). The vocals are kind of 80's-sounding, the guitars jangle just a little, and there's a bad lyric now and then. But there's enough of an edge, a little quirkiness, and emotive tunefulness to make them hip. This band has a head on its shoulders and hopefully we'll be hearing more from them (their scant amount of output for the long amount of time they've been around even makes our publication record look good). (yc)

The Folk Implosion - *Palm Of My Hand/Electric Idiot EP* CD (Communion)

This combo of these two outputs work well together as one cd. Lou and John's dark atonal musings set to a swaying beat. Jagged in a flat sonic landscape. (yc)



The For Carnation - Marshmallows (Matador)

Featuring an all-star line-up including Brian McMahan from Louisville's legendary Slint, Doug McCombs and Johnny Herndon of Tortoise, John Weiss of Rodan, and Tim Ruth of Evergreen, with ex-Shrimptboat/super producer Brad Wood engineering. The For Carnation bring us another spattering of quiet and understated softly beautiful music (with the exception of "I Wear The Gold" which is louder and more menacing than the rest, but good as well). These songs have a subtle grace and power that reward the patient and attentive listener. (yc)



Gapeseed - Project 64 (Silver Girl)

With their 8 song CD *Lo Cell* released a couple years back by Silver Girl, I'm surprised it's taken me til '96 to discover this band. *Lo Cell* had the Polvo tweaked guitar sound and while veering toward math rock, was as much about good riffs as weird structure. With *Project 64*, it sounds like they're almost shunning the notion of music altogether. Recorded by Bob Weston, the slow songs are still-ridden with unholy nerve tweaking noise. Some vocals sound like the Grifters while "Real Time Morning" has female vocals and is slow and pretty like Rodan. A little difficult to fathom, but all those up to the challenge should find them worth the effort. (gc)

Garden Variety - Knocking the Skill Level (Headhunter/Cargo)

Following up their Gem Blandsten LP by signing to San Diego's Headhunter, Garden Variety just don't come off as much as a punk band anymore. While this record isn't as instantly catchy or anthemic (or Jawbreaker-like), it marks a sonic maturity. They're headed at something greater than the parochial genre boundaries. Anthony's voice is still wrenching words out for view, vocal cords scratchy and pained. The pacing of the songs is more droney, the Unwound tendency to draw out riffs and play with the textures. Anthony's guitar and the melodies angle off in the expected unexpected points, floating on the skin of the rhythm section's churning balance. Garden Variety stand as an incredible band of the moment, but I think their best work is ahead of them. (gc)



Astrud Gilberto - compilation (Verve)

I have to admit, this is the one record which I've been listening to more than any other in recent days. I went to a Wherehouse [funny enough, the spellchecker suggests changing this to Whorehouse] store (!) in Oakland and paid full price (!) for this CD, two things I almost never do, being a cheapskate in general. And I knew I would like it, having listened to Stan Getz & Joao (wow) Gilberto's excellent collaborative LP (also on Verve). The one song that everyone probably knows is "The Girl From Ipanema"—a huge breakthrough single in 1963 which introduced bossanova jazz to the world, and on which Astrud Gilberto sang. I could not get this song out of my head for weeks! Astrud has a hauntingly unusual voice, not particularly virtuoso or smooth or overpowering or anything. But damn, you just can't forget her voice when she's singing. She proves she's no one hit wonder either. Whether she's singing a traditional bossanova arrangement ("Summer Samba", "Berimbau") or accompanied by a string section ("Once I Loved"), Astrud's understated, oddly accented voice is the center of attention. This is a terrific compilation for those who want to get an introduction to what the whole Getz/Gilberto/Jobim axis of jazz is like. (For those students of musical pop culture, there are some interesting similarities between Astrud Gilberto and another superstar of music—Snoop Doggy Dogg. Both were amateurs who became very famous very quickly by accident: Astrud, when a producer asked her to do a small guest vocal on her husband's record "The Girl From Ipanema"—and the record went on to sell millions of copies. Snoop, when he did a couple of guest raps on songs from Dr. Dre's "The Chronic". Both have vocal styles which were just so unlike anything else at the time, that people could not be satisfied with hearing their respective voices enough. Both Snoop and Astrud parlayed these guest vocal stints into careers of music superstardom!). (al)



GodheadSilo - Skyward in Triumph (Sub Pop)

Experts at making the sonic vulgar, godheadSilo continue plumbing the same vein on their first Sub Pop full-length. For those who have never seen them, godheadSilo are a two piece, bass and drums, who sound like an airport runway. When they played in Oakland, the drummer's hands were bloody by the end of the set. I don't know why or how. Hope I'm not giving the impression these Olympia via North Dakota ne'erdowells are like the band from Carrie's prom, but they have definite capacity to shock. The songs have some nice melodic riffs that float around the distortion and sometimes penetrate the surface, like the first track, "Echo Challenge". For endurance testing there's about eight minutes of one note beaten into the ground, which is still better than rave music. Punk and horror movies can sometimes be just about shock and convince us its content is subversive, but the works that leave you feeling the most ambivalent about their politics and form cut through our binary constructions of politics or aesthetics. GodheadSilo are well on their way to mastering that discomfort. (gc)

Godrays - Songs For TV Stars (Vernon Yard, 104 W 29th St, NY NY 10001)

Alex and Phoebe from the now-defunct Small Factory already have a new record out under the (kinda-dumb) name of The Godrays. On some songs, imagine a noisier Small Factory based around traditional rock riffs, where they hit the drums harder ("Both Your Names"). On some, well, just imagine Small Factory never broke up—that's a good thing. As a cheap keyboard owner, I love the cheap keyboard sound on "Crummy". They still do that male-female vocal harmony thing which pop kids love so much, and it usually disguises the fact that most of their songs are heavy on the melancholy side. Oh woe! Woe is me. Oh, they do a cover of Versus' "Crazy" which sounds exactly like the real thing. If you have \$\$ to spend, get the recent compilation of Small Factory's singles first. Try to find a promo of this somewhere for \$3 or so later on. (al)

Godzuki - Trial of the Lonesome Pine (March)

Jazzy pop, singer Erika recalls at moments Rebecca Odes. Styles vary here from expected twee inclinations veering into Charles Brown Superstar type noise jam ("Old Number 7"). (gc)

The Great Brain - Demos (PO Box 5467 Evanston, IL 60204), "Satan Superman/Dotbuster" 7" (Sonic Swirl, PO Box 770303, Lakewood, OH 44107)

Evanston must be so repressed; a town where beneath collegiate backdrops, reanimating sonic scientists can only be working out the formulas for unleashing suburban paranoia on itself. The Great Brain is spearheading the project, mixing math and melody to drive the youth into frenzied agitation. Tunes like "Crack Blues" are sicker than past efforts, but damned if change isn't admirable. They should be releasing a lot of these demo songs on the Swedish skatepunk label Futon. (gc)

"Satan Superman": Let your socks get knocked off by this band. Inspired by Steve Albini and Archers of Loaf, the Great Brain soars to sonic heights. Abusive yet melodic dueling guitars wrap around stressed vocals. Good stuff. (yc) "Dotbuster" is the better song, about violence against South Asians, set to the signature guitar flay over savant rhythm section. (gc)

Guided By Voices - Under The Bushes Under The Stars (Matador)

Let's start with the basic tenet that there is no such thing as bad GBV. Admittedly, *Under The Bushes...* lacks the immediacy of the last two albums (*Alien Lanes*, *Bee Thousand*), but after a few listens, the brilliance of the songs starts to hit you. Initially, I was taken aback that perfect lo-fi under 2-minute pop and noisy quirkiness had seemingly been replaced by slower, more produced, more homogenous, more straightforward rock (of course, straightforward being a relative term in the realm of GBV). Upon closer inspection though, that wasn't necessarily the case, and when it was, it ceased to matter. How could I have doubted? "Man Called Aerodynamics" starts these 24 songs off with a kick. The only song with ominous overtones is "Cut-out Witch". Everything else is pretty agreeably melodic. "Acorns & Orioles" and "Bright Paper Werewolves" are starkly beautiful. And of course there's the out and out enjoyable pop like "Your Name Is Wild", "Ghosts Of A Different Dream" and "Atom Eyes". This is a really good solid album. (yc)

Gumdrops - High Speed... O.K.? (Grass)

Really likeable indie rock done up Japanese. The guy vocals are surprisingly intelligible while the girl's are a bit under par for the genre (it's pretty hard to understand anything she's singing). Musically, this trio's got it together. Fuzzed out guitars, nice beats, good pop sensibility. A variety of moods keeps this interesting. A nice find from across the way. (yc)

The Halo Benders - Don't Tell Me Now (K)

More Calvin less Doug this time around, which is a bit like their live show. Songs about averting the draft and the Halo Benders theme bob along at amicable groove spans, while "Planned Obsolescence" kicks in with the whammy bar wank that makes or breaks Martsch's guitar style. While there's no obvious hit single on this record, the execution of concept is entertaining, the Halo Bender rhetoric on "Volume Mode" is practical and inspiring. (gc)

✓ **Heartworms - Enemies e.p. (Darla)**

Archie (Velocity Girl) and co. give us an e.p. of five songs that starts off soft and tuneful and ends up dark, ominous, almost tribal. The opener "I Don't Need To Know" makes me think Weezer for some reason, (the slowness, harmonies, and that little guitar bit?) and "Two Suns" is Galaxie 500-ish with wah-wah. I'm quite fond of the drumming and the male/female vocal contrast on the title track. "Sometimes I Never" is pretty fuzzed out and "Wisdom Teeth" closes things out with a clean guitar that fades into resonant heavy drum circle beats. The songs are a little long and self-indulgent, and the lyrics are nothing to write home about, but this does make for a good listen. These days, Heartworms could probably kick Velocity Girl's butt around the indie pop block a few times. (yc)

The Karl Hendricks Trio - For A While, It Was Funny (Merge)

I want to like this band. I really do. On the surface, this is great stuff to rock out to. But I can't get past Karl Hendricks. There are moments when I find his vocals emotional and appealing, but for the long haul, it gets to be droney and forced. I suppose that can succeed in dulling your senses to a stupor so you don't notice how mean and bitter the lyrics are, until you take a read of the insert. Hey, I'm not all sunshine and flowers, but I don't need his thinly veiled bile bringing me down. I guess this is just music for people with sicker souls than mine. (yc)

Henry's Dress - Bust'em Green (Slumberland)

Albuquerque imports Henry's Dress have carved out quite a niche for themselves in the Bay Area. Not fitting into any one local scene, they can play with garage bands, mods, punks, Brits and the catch-all indie-rock generic. They're too good to be claimed by the parochial boundaries we impose, but don't just trust the record, cause you gotta see them in action to get the real deal. Nonetheless, *Bust'em Green* is a good summer record, lazy and fuzzed out on occasion, then seized with the heatstroke spasm and feedback hum to a '60s beach film beat. Lyrics are finally audible on this record, and the fuzz is not as prominent as on their Slumberland 10". Get it now or they'll kick you in the fall. (gc)

Him - Egg (Southern)

Quiet nestled with flourishes from percussionist Doug Scharin, also of rex and sundry other outfits, floats around a world without backbeat to toss in random percussion instruments. This would probably be more interesting to other drummers, I found it better as background music. It does make me wonder how this whole scene is really owing much more to the Grateful Dead than anyone is conscious of, like Scharin's drum circle/conga contributions to Tortoise, or maybe I just have to come to terms with my inner-hippie. (gc)

Incredible Force of Junior - "Blue Cheer" 7" (Up)

This Seattle trio is so good it hurts! This isn't their best 7", but even their so-so stuff blows other bands out of the water. Raw kickass Northwest indie pop with nasally boy vocals and a rump shaking beat. You just gotta love it. (yc)

Irving Klaw Trio - (Silly Bird, PO Box 14604, Berkeley, CA 94712)

Jazz-noise band from Olympia featuring Union Pole label maven Jeff Fucillo. Opening track has that groovy bluesy swing and Spanish lyrics, horns and effects make one think John Zorn but less ambitious. Michael of Noggin and Behead the Prophet N.L.S.L. adds violin. They're really good and excessive, layering all sorts of noise atop the flamencore base, alert all of tender tongue. (gc)

JAKS - Hollywood Blood Capsules (Choke, 1376 W Grand, Chicago, IL 60622)

Dressed in black, JAKS set up an audience of lunatic fringe elements, seeping noise from leaky amps and slamming beats to jerk your chain. Katrina is the post-diva diva, yelping and choking her insecticide imagery, androgynous like Bowie but deglammed and full-fanged. You know that Green Day video where they're in the mental ward (admit it), what if some inmates wrested the instruments from them mid-lip sync and unleashed some real disturbance? You might get songs like "Dumbwaiter" or "The Conversation Lags", but you might not be so lucky. (gc)

Jawbox - s/t (TAG)

Jawbox is one of those bands that utilizes so many weapons of creativity in its songwriting that trying to describe their music is like trying to deconstruct classical literature for English class after reading the book jacket. I don't care if they're on a major label now, their records keep getting more sophisticated and that's a challenge that most bands don't even try to take on. The layered vocal stylings of "Livid" and "Empire Of One" demand your full attention. "Iodine", with its soulful bass groove and hip-hop-like drumbeat, is something that you could croon to your date in the moonlight. Wow, what you can do with a talented drummer is really amazing... Nothing as anthemic as "Savory" on this album, but just some great, challenging, precise songs that show Jawbox to be full of ideas on this, their 4th album. You'll be surprised how much they can make the last song, a cover of Tori Amos' "Comflake Girl", sound like one of their own. (al)

Mike Johnson - A Year of Mondays (TAG)

Dino Jr's Mike Johnson has this great deep voice that's set against mostly country-tinged tunes on this album. The music is often quite lovely and his voice has this sedate, almost seductive quality to it. A good listen in installments, but gets a little boring for one whole sitting. (yc)

Karate - s/t (Southern)

This band has a lot of potential, but this album is just not totally compelling. Kind of cool atonal vocals over pretty good S.D.-sounding music, but some of the lyrics are so cheesy they make me cringe. Which is too bad, because it keeps them from being really good. They make me think of Five-Eight for some reason (the vocals? maybe, but Karate's are not as expressive). (yc)

Karp - Suplex (K)

I never had my hessian phase. It's true, actually my schools were pretty hessian-less. We did have the late '80s breed of metalheads though, which might qualify for a different typology, but the point is I'm making up for that lack now. Karp are exemplars of my hessian obsession, ugly white guy music that rocks my stockings. It matters little to me whether they mean it; I saw'em a few years ago and their big afro flailing, amp destroying set seemed purely laughable. Now I submit to the Karp experience supplicant and numb, like those kids in that video, you know, that one. (gc)

Kustomized - At The Vanishing Point (Matador)

Members include Peter Prescott of Mission of Burma/Volcano Suns and Malcolm Travis, drummer of Sugar. Garage (punk?) rock that's stepped into the sunlight but left one foot firmly entrenched in the 80's. It's a mix of surf, punk, and rock presided over by P. Prescott's threatening voice and good guitar work. It hasn't won me over, but it's not bad by a long stretch. (yc)



Lambchop - "Hank" e.p., *How I Quit Smoking* (Merge)
Sleepy country-tinged beautifully orchestrated music from Nashville. Kind of the southern kinfolk of the Tindersticks. Really mellow lovely stuff. Rather humorous too. Unfortunately, things do start to sound somewhat alike before you get through the whole album (*How I Quit*..). Maybe listen to it parts at a time or something. The "Hank" e.p. was recorded live to 16 track last independence day weekend. I don't know what quality it is, maybe more organic (or just 'cause it's shorter) than the album, but it's an easier to connect to listen. (yc)

Land of the Loops - *Bundle of Joy* (Up)
Drum machine beats and samples with fat indie rock bass lines, the post-modern plate is flowing over. Recognizable snippets of Yazoo, Duane Eddy and Asian pop interspersed with keyboard, female vocalists and TV soundbites. Tech-nerd love rock, funny and bouncy tuneage, LOL are analog retrolutionaries guaranteed to illuminate future gatherings of these scribes. (gc)

Less Than Jake - *Losers, Kings, And Things We Don't Understand* (No Idea, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604)
LTJ is possibly the best ska-punk band to come down the pike since Operation Ivy, and that's a good musical starting point. They have a full-time horn section which just adds so much to the mix. The guitars and bass are straight outta NOFX/Rancid territory, and the vocals are as frenetic as humanly possible without taking speed. This is a compilation of all their numerous 7"s and 10", twenty-one tracks in all of jumpin', thrashing around like a boneless chicken, pez-popping ska-punk. These guys are definitely punk, no mistake about it. One of my favorites of last year. (al)

Life With Nixon - *The Sporting Life* e.p. 7". (Art Threat, PO Box 1592, Glasgow, G36QS)
Amiable British pop rock. The singer has a familiar but can't pin it down voice (a2 has elvis costello moments, b1's beginning almost sounds like Lou Barlow, believe it or not) b2 is an acoustic guitar number (he kind of sounds like the Bare Naked Ladies singer at times). The other tunes are more jangly guitar oriented. Rather enjoyable. (yc)

Love As Laughter - *The Greks Bring Gifts* (K)
I gotta admit up front that I'm a little worried about Sam (ex-lync). I read in some magazine a while back that he lives with his parents in Bellevue, Washington (a suburban city next to Seattle, and where MY parents live) and, as if it could get any worse, worked nights as a janitor in a strip bar. I hope he was lying. This is, of course, in addition to his fascination with masks. Anyway, Love as Laughter is his experimental playing with 4-track -previously-tape-releases-only solo thingy. Think lync but more low-fi and less palatial. Lots of tracks, some more song-like than others, some with crazy casioesque synthesizers. "Used to keep your company. but now I just keep your shade." nearly an hour of fun (a K records first?). (ts)

Maxiwagon - *Calls In Sick* (Omnibus)
This SF band transplanted from Davis plays meaty hook-laden pop punk and it's pretty damn good. They have a familiar sound that I can't pin down. Elements of these bands come to mind: Jawbreaker, Knapsack, Noise Addict, Boyracer, Kicking Giant, fluf, Bad Religion. By no means do they sound like copycats though. Just an amalgam of all that is great about indie rock. These kids are tight and will probably please many. (yc)

Mocket - *Bionic Parts* (Punk in My Vitamins?, PO Box 2283, Olympia, WA 98507)

They sound a lot punker with new drummer Danny, who has a weird setup (highhat in the middle, bass drum on the far right). Fuzzy and more fucked up than the pristine poppings of their Up 7" (2 of those songs, "Pearl Drop" and "Spark Plug", are redone here). New wave gone new school, maybe the difference is engineer John Goodmanson or the murky presence of Steve Fisk. Fave lyrics from "Nametag" are about the scenester identity swap games. Energy and urgency that's easy enough to plug into, but the first one's free and then withdrawal is less desired. Mocket is the bratty crush who treats you like shit but you still can't help wanting. (gc)

Bob Mould - s/t, "Egoverride" CD-5 EP (Rykodisc)

Even if this guy weren't a legendary figure in the history of independent rock, this would be an excellent album. I'm really surprised by how much this album hits me in the right places. I consider his two previous solo albums (in between Hüsker Dü and Sugar) to be the most mediocre of his material. Now this... damn it's good! It's rocking in the same way that the first Sugar album was enthused with the energy born of a new incarnation. Judging from the lyrical material, I'd say Bob has no shortage of bittersweet loose ends to fuel this collection of songs. "Anymore Time Between", "Next Time That You Leave", "Hair Stew", and "Roll Over And Die" all read like final letters from someone breaking off a failed relationship. The sound itself is very 90's, sparser than the last Sugar album, but very thick and crisp at the same time. Guitar wash and distorted keyboard parts ride over simple bass and drum combinations, usually at a calculated, deliberate pace. (yes, you can tap your feet) This album could sell to youngsters who were tots when Hüsker Dü broke up in 1986.

"Egoverride" is the first single from the new LP, and is easily the most radio-friendly song of the bunch. Catchy like a contagious disease that knocks you out. There's three non-album tracks here which are not as memorable as the album material, but let Bob experiment with the production in unusual ways. "Wanted Was" reminds me of something on Candy Apple Grey. For the Bob fan mostly. (al)

The Mountain Goats - *Nine Black Poppies* EP (Emperor Jones/Trance), *Songs About Fire* 7" (Cassiel, PO Box 43, Lincoln, MA 01773)

With output way too numerous to keep up with/track of, I've only just dipped my toes into the deep pool that is The Mountain Goats. I must thank Cory for introducing me to this fabulous band. Mainly the project of John Darnielle and Rachel, MG play heart-rendering acoustic beauty. John's vocals gently tear at you. Wonderfully geographic as well. *Poppies* starts off with the humorously sarcastic "Cubs In Five" and weaves tales through countrysides, bedrooms, glaring sun, and pointed guns, ending up in Amsterdam with a Refrigerator song and Alan Callaci joining in via phone from CA. Firsts for MG recordings include electric guitar ("Going To Utrecht") and drums ("I Know You've Come To Take My Toys Away"). My favorite off *Songs* is "Stars Around Her" with "Pure Gold" as runner-up. I just love that acoustic guitar-bass interaction. (yc)

The Multiple Cat - "The New Marcus Aurelius" 7" (Zero Hour)

I guess this band is the undertaking of one Pat Stolley. The A-side is some kind of 70's-80's pop-rock genre hodgepodge. It starts cheesy but has a catchy chorus that's a little British-sounding (music-wise). The B-side, "Red Volvo DL Wagon", is more intriguing. Sometimes angry, jangly pop that turns into demonic vocals over



keyboards/super-pedaled guitar (?) in the middle. It's pretty good. Judging by this 7", their full-length due out this summer should prove an interesting listen. (yc)

My Dad Is Dead - Shine(r) (Emperor Jones/Trance)

This is an incredibly good CD. It's a compilation of a limited edition double 7" (Shine), their Hello CD of the Month Club contribution, a song from Prisonshake's *I'm Really Fucked Now* box set, and 8 previously unreleased songs. MDID is mainly the work of Mark Edwards and he's been at it for quite some time. My favorite songs turned out to mostly be the unreleased ones ("In Your Mind", "Pillow Talk" - almost like American Wedding Present (!), "Weatherman"). Hello's "Always & Forever" was played entirely by Mark and has an amazing guitar-bass dynamic. "20 Yards Deep", "Redeye" are also great. "Gone Gonna Rise" and "Sabotage" are edgy acoustic numbers. "Like A Vise", "All My Strength", "The Only One" and "Taxi Driver" are on the slightly harder side. Mark has a rather unique voice that is flat but emotive (it sometimes makes me think of the way Jello Biafra talks. go figure). This CD will definitely make you think MDID has gone underappreciated for far too long. (yc)

Neutral Milk Hotel - On Avery Island (Merge)

Awesome fuzzed out orchestrated pop. From the Denver Apples in Stereo Chocolate USA scene, NMH weaves silvery-tongued tales over lovely rhythms. Track 12 is an opus of noise with the addition of various Indonesian instruments. (yc)

Number One Cup - Possum Trot Plan (Flydaddy, PO Box 4618, Seattle, WA 98104)

A mish mash of indie pop/rock styles mostly fronted by one of those nasal, plaintive popguy voices. I like this album but don't think I'd be able to win someone over by playing them just one song from it. If I had to try, I suppose my best bets would be "Just Let Go", "Divebomb", "Autumn Lover" or "Seminar For Backwards Pupils". Some moments make me think GBV or Pavement and, funny enough, "Lustrous Poppies" reminds me of The Mountain Goats a bit. A few of the songs are slow and pretty ("& Nico", "Static"). I like the somewhat uncharacteristic "Ohio Arts" (that and "Patch Kit" feature Casio backbeats). There's a few bad rhymes (e.g. "Apple Cider, sweet and brown / Apple Cider, knock me down"), but other than that, Number One Cup has done a fine job. (yc)



Odes - Me and My Big Mouth (Merge)

The long-awaited long player from Rebecca Odes throws some curveballs. An avid devotee of Lovechild's minimalism corrupted, the Moog fiddlin' on some of the new Odes songs seemed misplaced to me, but the techno touch blends into the straightforward song structures. Odes mouths off in her understated way, murmuring "I'm gonna wash my hands of fuckable you" on "All Talk, No Action". "Bottomfeeder", "Underwire" and "Lick My Plate" are the rockers, distorted and cavorting with strange embittered ex-'s, punning smarts and breaking hearts. Makes me want to get a Ph.D. in snappy comebacks. (gc)

The Olyptic Death Squad - Blue (Teenbeat)

Solo project of Mark Robinson. The bulk of the songs don't stray too far from the dulcet sounds of the kinder side of Unrest/Air Miami, including a dose of repetitive lyrics. But that's what we love. The other songs are a bit more driving/harsher. The first and last songs are Mark in his best big boy voice doing his Soft Cell impression. "The Anti-Kidnapping Song" is the closest thing to having elements of

Grenadine. If you like Mark's other bands, definitely check this out. (yc)

Oswald Five-O - Serenade (Grinning Idiot Records, PO Box 10634, Eugene, OR 97440, cbaxter@efn.org)

Kind of catchy hard edged Northwest pop punk that kind of makes me think if the Crabs went punk. The female vocals are not particularly feminine/girly. "Waiting For Vengeance" kind of breaks form and is pretty and slow. Not brilliant, but not bad. My favorite is "Fruit Salad Days" for the sentiment. (yc)

Panda - Select: 10% By Volume (Kokopop)

Panda does the SF retro pop thing and they do it well. The male-female vocals compliment each other nicely and they're competent musicians. I think you have to be a fan of the genre to really get into it though. (yc)

Pee - Now, More Charm And More Tender (March)

The best band in San Francisco, pee is pretty damn prolific; this CD has 19 song tracks and they have plenty more floating around waiting to be set down on future full-lengths. But the task at hand, *Now, More Charm...* released on the March record label, I rely on to bring me out of the frequent foul moods induced by unemployment and crushes gone awry. For those of you unfamiliar with the pee formula, they write pop songs with complex structures and weird time changes, kinda like Heavy Vegetable who they tribute on track 2. Andee calls it "grind-pop", obviously a better moniker than the godawful "cuddlecure", but I prefer the term "math pop". Most of the songs on here are either about other bands or childhood, and there are definite stylistic shifts going on in the minute spatial temporal song units. (gc)

Joel R.L. Phelps - Warm Springs Night (El Recordito, 1916 Pike Pl. #12-370, Seattle, WA 98101)

The first time we saw Silkworm back in early '93 my boyfriend Chris said to me (in reference to the fact that 3/4 of the band wrote and sang their own songs) "They won't stay together long; there's way too much creativity [competing] up there." Uh, I guess he was right. I should get rid of all pretenses of objectivity by admitting that I love this record. [I don't think I could gush any more unless it was a Built to Spill cd (whose latest I refrained from writing about because I didn't want to embarrass myself).] Think of Silkworm's (who I am equally fond of but for different reasons) first 2 full length releases, but with only songs like "Raised By Tigers" and "Oh How We Laughed." Sad (I can't figure out if the first song is about love, IV drug use, or love as IV drug use or vice versa) and beautiful. I listened to (and enjoyed) a crappy tape I made of the cd continuously for months before I dug out the cd and thought "gosh, this is even more fabuloso when the recording isn't all mucked up." In the midst of all the slow sad beauty there's even a rocker ("God Bless The Little Pigs"). If you're thinking something's missing from Silkworm's Matador double LP (Firewater), this might be it. (ts)

The Philistines Jr. - The Sinking Of The S.S. Danehower (Dot Dot Dash, PO Box 1971, New York, NY 10009)

Space tunes and jokey hokey lyrics mixed in with melodic bass chord strumming. This is less rock than their previous stuff, as symptomized by the cover of "Moon River". Whereas I used to think they sounded like a wimpier nerdy Jawbreaker, they could possibly be a nerdy under-skilled Sea and Cake. (gc)

Pie - *Strictly Séance* (Big Top, 955 Massachusetts Ave, Ste 115, Cambridge, MA 02139)

A clean urban sprawl nephew of Silkworm/Pavement. There are parts to all these songs that are absolutely fantastic, but the band has this weird way of adding elements that end up lessening the overall wonder. The first song, "Tony, Porn Star" is a perfect example. The first 2 minutes of the song are lovely driving guitars that make you think you've just found the next indie rock phenomenon, then it transitions to almost cheese regular (alternative) rock. The vocals are a saving grace in this case. Despite this shooting-itself-in-the-foot shortcoming, there is enough to like about this album to make it worth your while. They segue from gentility to rage seamlessly and the musicianship is pretty first-rate. It would be a shame if they were lost to obscurity. (yc)

Pitchblende - *GYGAX!* (Headhunter/Cargo)

Twist your mind along to this DC quartet's third album. Complexities abound in the eclectic/eccentric world of Pitchblende, but that's what makes this math rock so good. Awesome drumming and meaty bass anchor flying guitars and misleadingly atonal vocals. Cool horn parts too. Not quite as accessible as their previous albums (though their GYGAX! bio states otherwise), mainly due to the meandering nature of some of the songs. (yc)

Purple Ivy Shadows - "Feeble" 7" (Zero Hour)

This Rhode Island band plays pretty, understated pop-rock. "Feeble" has more of a rock edge while "Sustance" sports a country tinge. Both songs are quite good. Previous stuff on spinART. (yc)

Putney Swope - *The Narrow Pathetic World Of Putney Swope* (20/20, PO Box 7772, Olympia, WA 98507)

Really short (like 20 second) songs by the Putney Swope blues imposition, or better known as that Track Star guy doing low-fi snippets of angst and sonic trauma. The songwriter as angry young man about town. Hot shit tape label 20/20 is just bustin'em out. (gc)

The Raymond Brake - *Piles Of Dirty Winters* (Simple Machines, PO Box 10290, Arlington, VA 22210)

One of my favorite new discoveries of last year (another being Boy's Life). This foursome based in Greensboro, NC really impressed me. Effortlessly shifting from sparse acoustic ("Laying Down") to full-throttle complex pop-rock ("Dolley Madison"), The Raymond Brake perform with a skill that belies their young age (college kids I think). Guitar parts like the fists of those punching nuns. Vocals that cradle and comfort, and then toss you out abruptly. A thoroughly competent and amazing debut. (yc)

Red Stars Theory - 7"(Rx, PO Box 85594, Seattle, WA 98195)

Apparently, they rock much harder than this 7", for which I am relieved. Former Lync and Christopher Robin (and current Modest Mouse) folk turn out pleasant sides, hardly a headbanging proposition. The vocals sound a lot cleaner and produced on one side. I find that problematic in bands where it seems like cleanliness means compromise. They just released a 10" on Deluxe. (gc)

Refrigerator - *Anchors of Bleed* (Communion)

The Shrimper house band is quite a sight to behold. With rudimentary guitar and drums, theatrical vocals and simple pretty songs, you are transfixed. The Guided By Voices set should by all counts be accustomed to this style - emotional songwriters with odd accents. Super earnest and likeable, I won't make any jokes about

the band's name cause hell, it's a pretty good name for a band, and they live up to it. (gc)

Reservoir - (Zero Hour)

A boy and his Korg. (gc)



Retriever - *Three Second Stereo 10"* (Silver Girl)

Former solo project of Kevin Castillo is now a full sounding noisy pop band, a bit of debt to Superchunk and Pavement but seemingly paid off in recorded installments. (gc)

This is fantastic edgy pop packed in with delicate fuzz ("Twenty Birthdays"), space bubbles ("Cosmos"), and acoustic+casio collaboration ("Capo"). Retriever also has an incredible song on the KXLU comp (a fundraiser promotion, but if you ever see one, grab it because it's got loads of great stuff on it - Kicking Giant, Nuzzle, Citizens Utilities, Los Cinos, Karp, further, Diskothi-Q, Fisticuffs Bluff - to name a few off the top of my head. all live in-studio). (yc)

Rex - *Waltz* EP (Southern)

Four songs of country-tinged loveliness. Featuring Doug Scharin (Codeine, June of 44, Him) and former bandmates from Otis Coyote, Rex plays from an indie rock shed in the heart of a backwater swamp. An easy reference point would be Palace, but Rex has a bit more of a sense of sophistication (not to detract from either band). Their style skillfully varies through the e.p. "High School Dance Hit" is lulling and gentle (with soothing cello) while "Willow Garden" is pitiful lament sounds like it's sung from and through the bottle. "Sorry", with its accordion and ever-so-slightly flat vocals, could almost be zydeco moving through syrup. "Blue Eyes You're Not" rounds out the experience with grace and sadness and the closest you'll get to a sonic beating on here with some generous helpings of guitar wash. This was my introduction to Rexville. Think I'm gonna like it here. (yc)

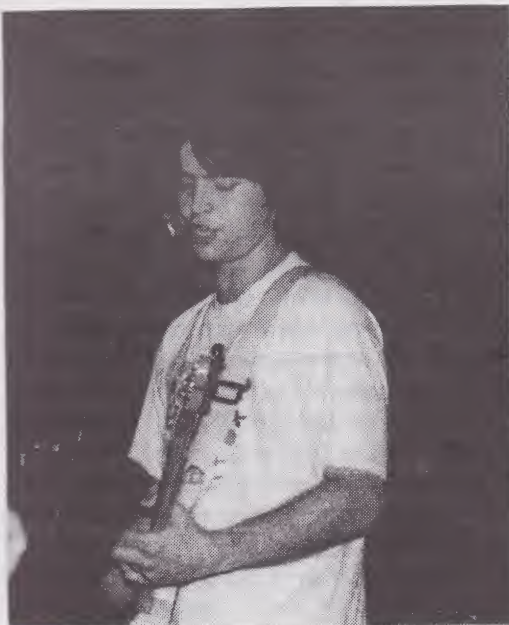
Rocketship - *A Certain Smile, A Certain Sadness* (Slumberland)

I could listen to the first song on this album a million times. It's so catchy! This is really my first exposure to Rocketship, though I knew they were a great band through word of mouth (Kane). They were doing the analog pop thing way before the Rentals even formed. Sweet boy/girl vocals crest on contrasting quick clips and sprawling gorgeousness. Mocking the dreamy and pleasant sound are brokenhearted and hedgingly hopeful lyrics. Your heart will be torn between reveling in the beautiful pop and wallowing in the failure of romantic relations. The album closes out with this thought: "Don't you think we could pretend that friendships and love never end? But I know it's true, they do". At least this recording, and hopefully the band, will be around for a long time to come. (yc)

Rollerskate Skinny - *Horsedrawn Wishes* (Warner Bros.)

I avoided this in the station review box because I didn't remember what they sounded like nor having been terribly impressed by them when they opened for Pavement. Months later I was handed it to review, and to my surprise, totally dug it. This is pretty cool stuff from this Irish band. I tried to come up with a good "meets" description because there was definitely one to be had, but the furthest I could get with it is Pavement meets The Stone Roses and a couple guys from Blur in a concert hall that doubles as a dance club on the weekends. Spacey and melodic with great orchestration and rhythms. Plenty of guitar served up with keyboards and topped off with soothing male vocals. Goes down easy and tastes good. (yc)





The Ropers - *All The Time* (Slumberland)
Hailing from DC, The Ropers are ultimately more convincing live - their recordings portray them as wimpier than they actually are. But having said that, this is still a very good album.

Recorded by Kurt Ralske, *All The Time* consists mostly of gentle, carefully-crafted guitar-driven pop. It's possible to get a sense of their latent rock energy on songs like "You Have A Light On",

"Blind", "Chained", and "Tried". Artistry is the point here, so to experience them fully, check them out the next time they play your town. While you're waiting, enjoy this record. (yc)

Scenic Vermont - 7" (Suicide Squeeze, 4505 University Way NE Box 434, Seattle, WA 98105)

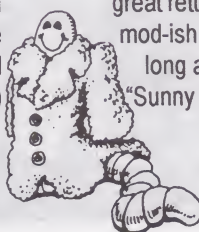
Local boys put out midtempo rock that if I didn't know better, I'd say wanted to be Brit mope. Maybe that's just the vocals. I have no idea who's singing "the epilogue fits" but it certainly doesn't match up with the Lync comparisons they've been getting recently. Still, recorded by Wyatt, there's a lot of pretty guitar stuff and a shimmery pleasantness to the whole affair. They've been switching members around a lot, so this may not be representative anymore. (gc)

Scud Mountain Boys - *Massachusetts* (Sub Pop)

Glam nouveau country. And it's good. I've read comparisons to the Eagles, but seeing as I'm pretty ignorant of that whole thing, I'll defer to the experts, because I think I could imagine it. As far as I'm concerned, the main vocalist kind of sounds like a non-British Elvis Costello crooning country (though on one of my favorites, "Cigarette Sandwich", there are moments that are almost Jeff Tweedy). The music is pretty slick and well-produced but the heart wrenching elements of steel, mandolin, and acoustic guitar keep this earthy. It lacks the rawness that usually makes music like this appealing to me, but they're from Massachusetts, so I can forgive them that. Most of the lyrics are richly depressing, but somewhat offset by the mild music when you're not paying close attention. Given the right mood, this could easily be cry-into-your-beer soundtrack. Even at their least appealing ("Grudge *****" is pretty cheese: "I would give anything to make it with you just one more time", piano, wanky guitar solo), they still manage to strike a chord. A testament to the power of Scud. (yc)

Shotwell Coho - 7" (Broken Rekids, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402)

Jimmy from Strawman, Paul Curran and Aaron Elliot do four originals and a cover of "Redemption Song". The Mission District sound in full force, if you liked any of the bands these guys were in (I'm not even gonna try to list them all, it'll take a large chunk of this page let me assure you), you'll probably like this record. Jimmy's an underrated guitarist and songwriter; but one of the best who can claim punk. (gc)



Sicko - *Chef Boy RU Dum* (eMpTy, PO Box 12034, Seattle, WA 98102)

This Seattle trio has delivered another album (their 3rd full length) of perfectly created clever power pop punk. Sicko may not be the most original thing you've ever heard, but they are masters of their craft and heartily deserve props so support them. (yc)

Silkworm - *Firewater* (Matador)

Silkworm's 3rd full album is full of drunk honesty, the kind of introspection that escapes from your head when you're just a little liquored up and you can recognize the sadness of your situation. The whole theme of the album, it would seem, is the exploration of the world in an altered state. Alcohol=medicine for a tired existence (refer to the inside artwork here). Sparse instrumentation, rambling bass lines over expressive drumming and subtle guitar work, then those long noodly J Mascis type guitar solos that recall frustration of things never working out right. Listen to the folksy "Miracle Mile" and feel fortunate you're not in a touring band. Drink a couple of martinis, kick back, soak in it, call me in the morning. (al)

Sleater-Kinney - *Call The Doctor* (Chainsaw, PO Box 42600, Portland, OR 97242)

Kicks so much ass. Corin (Heavens2Betsy) and Carrie (Excuse 17) bring the best from their former bands to make female-conscious compelling melodic punk. Corin's voice, splitting with emotion, condemns and laments while the guitars counter and exalt, bolstered by Lora's concise intricate beats. When Carrie and Lora join in on vocals, it enhances further. Simply brilliant. (yc)

Small Factory - *The Industrial Evolution* (Pop Narcotic)

This is a singles compilation replete with mini-reproductions of their 7" covers. This is sweet love-angst pop delivered by cutes Alex & Phoebe (now in Godrays) and David. When David sings he sounds British and his songs are more twee. I'd have to say I like them a lot less, but they do manage to grow on you after a while. Included is one of my favorite Small Factory songs, "If You Hurt Me" from their Working Holiday split with Tsunami, that just tears at your heart. Not having been a Small Factory completist, I find this to be a great collection. "Scared Of Love" is fast becoming a fixture in my mental jukebox. (yc)

The Smugglers - *Selling the Sizzle!* (Mint, #699-810 W Broadway, Vancouver, BC Canada/Lookout)

Snotty sounding but endearing übercatchy pop punk out of Canada. In the same vein as the Hi-Fives, but more fun. The bonus track has an amusing telling of red riding hood and a hi-larious Euro dance version of "Especially You". (yc)

Snuff - *Demmamussabebonk* (Fat Wreck Chords, PO Box 460144, San Francisco, CA 94146)

When I saw the long title of Snuff's new album, I had high hopes that it would be as rockin' as their first album, the gratuitously-titled *Snuffsaidgorblimeyguvstonemeifhedidntthrowawobblenchachachachachachachachayou'regoinghomeinacosmicambience* (OK, so I just wanted to see that in print). I wasn't disappointed! This is a totally great return to punk-rock form after a period of messing around with mod-ish Hammond organs for the band that has been doing this as long as anybody. Try not to jump up and down during "Martin" or "Sunny Places" singing like a crazy idiot. Snuff is so much fun. Get this instead of the new Green Day record. (al)

Sone - *Holiday and Sport* EP. (Darla)

Sone broke up right after they played in San Francisco in June. Just wanted to get that out in the open before you start developing a desire to see them live. Two indie rock songs. Two wacky synth instrumentals and one that merges the two (called "Drop The Synth"). Lines like "What's Genera boy gonna due? Meet the Esprit girl after school." brought on flashbacks of high school. There's a strange obsession with sports and Linda Evangelista. Aaron's synth solo project (which I imagine sounds a lot like L.E.O - "Linda Evangelista Overdrive" and its remixes) should have something out soon....I think they're called California. (ts)

The Sonora Pine - (Quarterstick, PO Box 25392, Chicago, IL 60625)

Good as it's gotten lately to make me want to keep writing about music or anything, to keep your mind from sinking into the depths of the bored and forsaken. From folks who've made the best music of the early mid nineties, Tara Jane O'Neil and Kevin Coultas of Rodan, Sean Meadows from June of 44, joined by violinist Samara Lubelski. Think all those groups and you'll have a feeling for the majestic beauty they dispense through uneasy listening. One of the good ones. (gc)

Spare Snare - (Prospective/Twin Tone, 2217 Nicollet Ave South, Minneapolis, MN 55404)

Cool British band. Pretty slide guitar adorns the sleepy first version of "Thorns" (first song) while the second version (last song) quietly rocks with fuzz. The in-between ranges from pretty indie guitar ballad ("Shine On Now") to dark surf overtones ("My Better Half"). "Super Slinky" sports a white-boy blues bass-line. "Bugs" reminds me of the Rentals (the cover is Weezer blue). Other bands I thought of while listening to this: Track Star, Grifters, a little GBV?. (yc)

Spent - *Songs Of Drinking And Rebellion* (Merge)

Even though this has been out for some time and John King said he was going to get it sent to me but I ended up having to buy it, I'm going to plug it anyway because it's a great album. I first heard of Spent a few years back because John did a great zine called *Spleen*. Little did I know the caliber of the band and now wish I had paid closer attention. Brilliant song-writing, good lyrics, great vocals, accomplished musicianship. Pardon my french, but this is the shit. Joe, John and Annie all sing in their unique manner: Joe is deep and like a more singy Calvin, John is kind of like Sean Crayon+Mac Superchunk, and Annie is smooth loveliness. Speed to languor, jaunty to rueful, Spent do it with style and substance. (yc)

The Spinanes - *Strand* (Sub Pop)

For those of you who are disappointed with this follow-up album to *Manos*, I can only say one thing - you are LAME. More laid back and layered, this album is beautiful and sexy. Music to seduce by. That's not to say there's a lack of songs that will get your

body jiggling. "Valency", "Oceanwide", and "Lines and Lines" (once it kicks in) do just fine. A splendid outing, and don't let anyone tell you different. Translates even better live now that they've added another guitar and bass. They always said it was just a matter of time... (yc)

Stereolab - *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* (Elektra)

I'd seen Stereolab in 1993 at a Mod Lang in-store performance. Maybe it was the lack of oxygen and extreme humidity of shallow exhaling indiephiliacs, but I couldn't get too into it. I don't even recall if they had a bass then, but the band I saw in April seemed pretty dramatically removed. Sure they retained some ethereal intensity and sported the reclamation of analog, but an added groove factor the crowd had latched onto made itself apparent. Later, I would struggle to put *Emperor Tomato Ketchup* on at a party where everyone was into hip-hop, trying to explain how the tired old Tribe and De La could be upended by the Europeans, but no one was listening. Stereolab's radical (pseudo-Marxist?) lyrics get turned into pidgin sing song, insinuating under the cover of niceness. Drowse on Amerikkka. (gc)

Sugar Plant - *Cage Of The Sun* EP (Pop Narcotic)

Dreamy Japanese alt/indie pop rock. Girl vocals with that charming inability to pronounce English clearly. Elements of Galaxie 500, mellow Yo La Tengo, David Lynch. There's a Young Marble Giants cover and a pretty version of a Flaming Lips song. This is quite impressive. (yc)

Swing Kids - 7" (PO Box 178262 San Diego, CA 92177-8262)

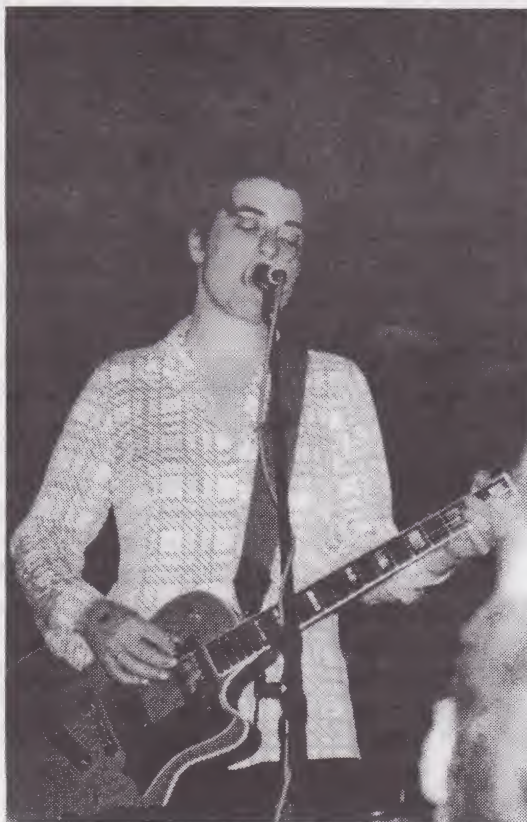
I know this is really old, but totally captivating. "Disease" starts off with a drum solo and jazz riff, then bleating and spastic hardcore. Includes insert on Prop 187 and more fast furious jazz-punk noise than you can calculate the BPM for. They recently released a split with Spanazorzo and a 10" of their own. Hope there's some left after getting back from a European tour this summer. (gc)

Swirlies - *They Spent Their Wild Youthful Days In The Glittering World Of The Salons* (Taang, 706 Pismo Ct. San Diego, CA 92109)

They broke up in the middle of touring for this album, but at least the music is still with us. Spacey math pop full of electronic musings and lovely male/female vocals. "In Harmony New Found Freedom" is kind of like mellow Heavy Vegetable and "Sounds of Sebring" is Stereolabish. But Swirlies are in no way derivative. They have a beautiful sound and it will be missed. George notes less whammy bar than on previous outings. (yc)

Talulah Gosh - *Backwash* (K)

There are probably a hundred people a day who flip by this album and don't know what they're missing. There are probably a lot of Heavenly fans who don't even know about Talulah Gosh, and that's an injustice, but understandable, since nothing by them has ever been accessible in stores in this country. Talulah Gosh was the precursor to Heavenly. As the title would suggest, this is a discography of everything they ever recorded, clocking in at 52 minutes, 25 songs of pure, unadulterated pop. Much less shimmery than Heavenly,



and nowhere as tight, but terrific in its own right. Sweet, bouncy, exhilarating, killer harmonies between Amelia and Elizabeth/Eithne (the other two vocalists), this material has been cruelly withheld from starving Heavenly fans for 8 years. Anyone who appreciates the current crop of girl-pop bands should like this record and recognize it as sort of a watershed for the genre. Don't bother waiting for this to turn up used somewhere. You might as well wait for Fugazi to sign to Warner Brothers. Excellent stuff! Now when is K going to re-release the first Heavenly record? (al)

Team Dresch - *Captain, My Captain* (Candy Ass/Chainsaw)
(I just noticed that track 8 and 9 are reversed, must've been mastered wrong.) Where identity politics and music intersect you can get a lot of weird fragments and misfirings, along with the hegemonic requirements of marketing to niche a, b or c. In a miasma of diluted ideology, Team Dresch put out the strongest penetrating signal like their closing song, "Who You Are" invites. "Transmit messages about who you are/No matter who you are." "Musical Fanzine" describes queer kids establishing a place amidst invisibility, an essential identity for pride. While on one level TD are merely an awesome rock band, they also serve as a kind of vanguard role for the queer punk community. Now that they've officially called it quits, who else has the vision to sing about the personal and political as daily survival? They even have a reasonable take on the crop of indie-jumping punks, "Do it yourself means do it for me." Though on one level the band does hero worship, songs like "Uncle Phranc" and even the name Team Dresch or the album title, their plea for kids to figure shit out for themselves is what stands out. (gc)

Ten O'Clock Scholar - *Quietest* (Grass)
Ten O'Clock Scholar are from Dayton, and harken back to the days of more complex bands on Grass records. A little math rocking, recalling Boy's Life or A Minor Forest, they're musically impressive and heavy without pummeling or forsaking tunes. Lots of din from a three-piece, vocals in a box and harmonics groove more than anything. Surprisingly great. (gc)

Thinking Fellers Union Local 282 - *I Hope It Lands* (Communion)
I'd put this on while cooking and find it pretty pedestrian, but when you slip headphones on, some of the instrumental interplay stands out. Elements of country, lounge, noise point toward skillful musicians willfully transgressing genres but what have they left in their wake? Songs about lizards and one Elgin Miller are pretty dense, and the female singer sounds so nondescript that it's pretty cool. When I had the opportunity to see them recently, more people were there for opening act Polvo, who seemed an odd pairing, though "Triple X" has Polvo moments. TFUL 282 have historic landmark status, though it's hard to pinpoint what's unique and recognizable as their style. Some of the instrumentals are way cooler than the full on pop songs, with banjos, weird tones and piano rescripting the notion of a SF sound. (gc)

Thirty Ought Six - *Hag Seed* (Mute)
As one of the few signings to Mute America, Thirty Ought Six seem an odd choice for mainstreaming. Angry, loud and melodic is a genre poised to break, but their music is more complex than catchy. The singer from Sunny Day Real Estate adds his whine to a latter track, but it's mostly Sean's tireless gut-rending expulsion/exorcism that grips you most of the duration. There are more slow songs on

Hag Seed than *Bosozuko*, but the hard parts are fairly spread out. What do you make of lyrics like "Once took a bullet in the neck fired by a friend/ we never spoke again"? Violence is floating through all these songs, maybe the threat is always potential energy wound through strings and sticks ready to snap. (gc)

Thrush Hermit - "French Inhale" double 7" (Genius, PO Box 481052, Los Angeles, CA 90048)

These young lads from Halifax punch out some good but not spectacular indie pop rock on "French Inhale" and "Hated It". But wait! "Glum Boy", despite its lyrical repetitiveness, stands out as a slow-paced pop classic. This song will never lose all of its charm. (yc)

Tiger 100 - 7" (?)

Rad bluesy Jehu-esque three songs from Michigan. Sounding like Phleg Camp with some slide guitar, awesome drumming and catchy playing. They're broken up now, but after listening to this, you can see what we've missed. (gc)

Toenut - *Information* (Mute)

An engaging first album from this Atlanta, Georgia quintet. The female vocalist has this intense versatile voice that she uses in bizarre ways (chilling screams on "Information/32nd theme song", eerie caterwaul on "Trilogy"). Watching them live, it's hard to believe her thin body can make such sounds. Stylistically, they're hard to pin down. At times they sound like a brawnier Lush-type band, at others like a heavier-handed East Bay/SF quirk pop band. I like it all except for the part of the last song, "Jesus Finger", which is white trash woman berating her useless man over kind of funky music. The punk interlude with guys yelling is much better. Ever heard a song about having hookworms? Well here you go, and pretty graphic at that. Levity is certainly added by creative use of samples. They put them to good use in other songs as well, and reproduce them faithfully in live performance. I didn't care much for the guitarists' stage theatrics, but the musicianship was excellent, especially the skinny Doogie Howser-looking drummer. (yc)

Track Star - *Sometimes, What's The Difference* 10" (Silver Girl)
George lured me to Track Star with broad allusions to Pavement. Does it matter? I dunno; let's just say that I'll play the 10" over and over again but haven't pulled out a Pavement CD in ages. I'm a

sucker for catchy, ironic lines like "She will always cry at the drop of a hat. and I wonder why -- I'm the only guy who ever drops a hat." Quite a range for a seven song e.p., with the second side being more raucous. From the mellow love song "Burn Down The Bed" to the distorted screaming of "You take it away" over and over on the last song ("Sucked Down"). Currently competing with Pee as my fave SF band, their neat-o athletic wear inspired T-shirt (San Francisco Track Star #13) lets you be a track star, or just look like one. (ts)





Tullycraft - *Old Traditions, New Standards* (Harriet)

A couple of previously released tunes are juxtaposed with new stuff all mixed by Pat Maley at Yo Yo. Sean, Jeff and Gary follow their own precedent of writing kiddie angst lyrics via sweet pop entrapment. "Pop Songs Your New Boyfriend's Too Stupid to Know About" got deserved attention when it appeared on Harriet's *The Long Secret Comp*, maybe because it draws favorably on fandom, unlike the cynical critique of Mary Lou Lord's "Indie World", where she interchangeably spiels off bands that her man canonizes whilst denying her folk heroes. Maybe what makes Tullycraft so revolutionary in this period of heavy-handed irony is its musical earnestness. While cuteness may not be everyone's favored aesthetic, Tullycraft could lead the new school of love rock as Seattle's answer to its sordid self. Before early nineties grunge nostalgia hits, prepare for the wave of clean-cut, sugar-

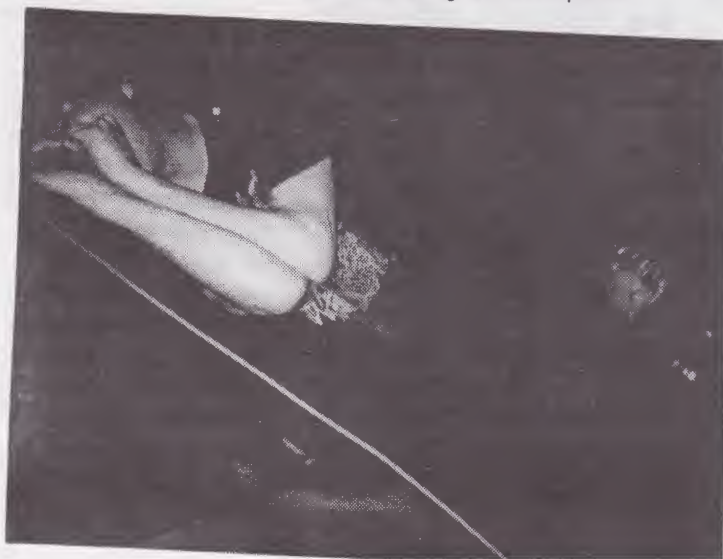
addled bespectacled nice-kids to terrorize your mall. (gc)

Untitled - (Drag City, PO Box 476867, Chicago, IL 60647)

Cynthia Dall is in Smog and has appeared in disturbing Rollerderby photo layouts while not lobbying our state government. Here she plays some songs with minimal outside help. Her voice sometimes recalls Rebecca Odes with their breathy, little kid quality, but that also makes everything said that much creepier. Lots of piano, weird ambiance and sparing application of a backbeat on most tracks, "Holland" has male vocal accompaniment. Dall is the weird extrovert Wednesday Addams to the indie intelligentsia, and I have a feeling she's gonna get what she wants for Christmas. (gc)

Unwound - *Repetition* (Kill Rock Stars)

Olympia's answer to "what the fuck's so great about Olympia anyway?" The bullet that is Unwound tears through the panes of convention, leaving a path others have been compelled to follow but while they trace the fracture patterns, most remain unable to reproduce the impact. Veering into dub along with the expected



soundbursts, Sara, Justin and Vern keep you on your toes, drown out enemy screams with scalding feedback and Steve Fisk's sonic interventions. Better than the last but not as good as the next. (gc)

V.Card - *Pool Shark* CD EP (Allied)

Straight-forward pop-punk with ominous European-sounding vocals, maybe like the guy from Leatherface. There's more urgency to V.Card's music than say, J-Church, especially in lines like "take your baggy pants and shove them up your ass", a dis to kids who tag graffiti on the bus stop. Is this something we should be so concerned about? I mean, I wrote "Beastie Boys Rule!" on a locker in 7th grade. Anyway, they've got a sharp sound, and they do a great cover of INXS' "Don't Change The World". So yeah, go see them when they play in your town. (al)

VIA - *Does The Word Duh Mean Anything To You?* (Ché, PO Box 653, London, E18 2NX, UK)

This is a label I've only just recently and abruptly become aware of, thanks to the rad Glaswegian foursome Urusei Yatsura. Their songs are some of the better ones on this comp featuring a sampling of two songs each from nine Ché artists. Urusei rock out in true indie style (Pavementesque) and can sure deliver a good hook on "Powerball". "Jonathan & Charles" is slow and pretty, but then knocks you one. Unfortunately, I've got to call them on this badly executed rhyme: "It's no fun/it's attrition". The other great songs on here come from 18th Dye (especially the understated beauty turned fuzz rock "Poolhouse Blue"). The Bardots (glam pop) and Disco Inferno (moody pop-rock, Ché's first band) are enjoyable and Kirk Lake does some amusing spoken word. Damon and Naomi's Magic Hour give a likeable enough mellow dreamy pop performance complete with little electric guitar solos. Slipstream features Mark Refoy, who quit Spiritualized, and is good, but a little wanky for my tastes. I don't have the attention span to deal with Bardo Pond (though "Vent" does get interesting in its fourth minute) and SF's Dart is completely unappealing to me. If this is an accurate reflection of the label, then I eagerly look forward to their really good stuff and wouldn't feel too bad if I missed out on the rest. (yc)

VIA - *Eucalyptus* (PO Box 4164, Crofton, MD 21114)

"SO there's this kid named Ken from the South Bay, and he wasn't very popular, but he set up some shows and got some bands to contribute to a double 7". He got songs from Indian Summer, Current, Allure, Shroomunion, Boilermaker, Embassy and Julia, moved to Maryland and pressed this record. Indian Summer, Allure, Shroomunion and Current broke up, but it wasn't his fault. Boilermaker's song got rerecorded on their Goldenrod full-length. Embassy and Julia were pretty good live bands, but these songs weren't their best. Still, the bands were pretty popular and are posthumously interesting and listenable, but this record is hard to find. What's the moral of this story? Yes George? "Eucalyptus? I got a cousin named Calyptus!" (gc)

VIA - *Give Me The Cure: 18 DC Bands Interpret The Cure* (Radiopaque/Corduroy)

It was only a matter of time before someone put out a compilation of cover songs by the Cure, and this is as good an effort as one could expect, with about as many hits as misses. The fact that all the bands are from the Washington DC area doesn't really affect the diversity of the interpretations here. After all, the Cure have put out some pretty disparate material over the years. Candy Machine and

My Life In Rain do pretty straightforward rocked-out versions of "10:15 Saturday Night" and "Pictures Of You", respectively. Gloworm ("Friday I'm In Love") and Tuscadero ("Boys Don't Cry") appease the pop crowd with shimmery ballad treatments of those songs. The most interesting songs are those that are the farthest from the original: DJ Bootious Maximus remixes "The Love Cats" into a hip-hop groove, with the original vocals intact. Jawbox do an almost lounge-ish cover of "Meat Hook" from the Cure's very first LP. This album is pretty amusing, but if you're a hard-core Cure fan, you probably wouldn't like it as much. (al)

VIA - *Invasion Of The Indie Snatchers* (Allied)

This is what a compilation should really be all about. Give some relatively unheard-of bands from across the country one song each to show off their talent, put together an attractive package, and sell it for a reasonable price. If I was in an aspiring punk band, I'd be lining up for the chance to be on the next Allied comp. John Yates is doing more to strengthen the underground punk scene than anybody else who comes to mind. 24 different bands of different persuasions offer the real goods. Personally, I think the Cars Get Crushed song "The Stranger" is a work of melodic beauty. Hot Water Music really impressed me with their soulful "Counting Numbers"; Cromwell, Gus, & Water Monitor all have excellent contributions. I'm sure any fan of punk can find something to appreciate on this diverse comp. (al) I liked the Franklin and Car vs Driver tracks as well, but there's also one of the last Strawman songs on here, "No Generation," that makes me miss them immensely, tearing up the punks with "Haircuts From '81 Sitcoms." (gc)

VIA - *Lounge Ax Defense & Relocation CD* (Touch & Go)

A long anticipated comp to raise funds to help the Lounge Ax club in Chicago survive its fight with the City Liquor Commission and mean-spirited neighbors. A who's-who of Eastern and Midwestern indie rock giants contribute songs to the cause. Particularly strong tracks come from Seam, sounding uncharacteristically urgent, and June of 44, who continue to win me over with their weird arrangements. Archers of Loaf add a surfy instrumental that sounds like a TV show theme song. There are a share of below-average contributions from normally stellar bands, but I guess that's not really the point of this album. The moral of the story is: support your local indie-rock venue now, before you wake up and it's gone. (al)

VIA - *Sasquatch* (Kirbdog, PO Box 286, Santa Rosa, CA 95401)

A rerelease of an old double 7" Kirby put out, plus about 12 others. Best of the new songs for my money are Kid Dynamo's "Shade of Winter", Four Wheel Jet, Grady Sisters, Sari and Ground Round. The original songs from years back were by Cringer, Moral Crux, Schlöng, et al. (gc)

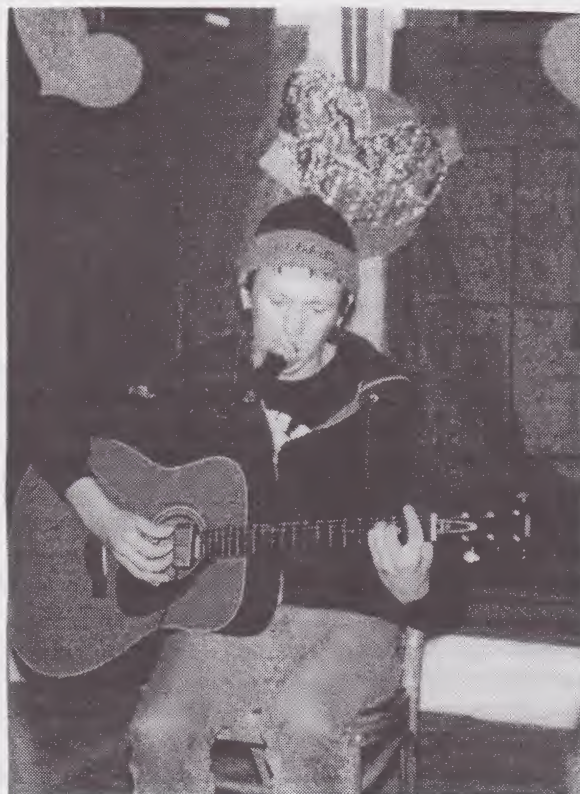
VIA - *SKAM: A Compilation of Super Kick Ass Music* (S.K.A.M., PO Box 651, Iowa City, IA 52244-0651)

This comp certainly delivers on its title. The best songs on here are the Kill Rock Stars-type of female punk pop (Eternalux, Succubus, Black Ink Pen, Ambush #5, Little Switzerland, Judaism Blume). Here's a summary of the rest: Souze Loaf serves up cool punk noise; Los Marauders' "Hot Bunko Joe" is foot-tappin' punkabilly; Ambassador Krill does emo-ish punk; A Minor Forest are local boys making noise (sound level is particularly low); Chowchilla is jaunty pop punk; Rain Makes Applesauce delivers skewered pop in a kind of sedated New Bad Things way; Radar Dolls make punk that's a little DC-ish. All in all a really great record. Very indie and with a

conscience. Proceeds go to United Action for Youth, a non-profit organization in Iowa City. Check out the writing about incarceration and as Jamie says, "GET EDUCATED, GET INVOLVED, GET ACTIVE!". (yc)

VIA - *Slice of Lemon* (Kill Rock Stars/Lookout)

I like maybe half of this record; unfortunately, the good songs are dispersed throughout both CDs. Excuse Seventeen, MTX, Elliott Smith, Mary Lou Lord, Go Sailor and Pee Chees offer predictable (for each respective band's style) good contributions, but for bands I'd never heard on CD, Solid Gold, Bonnot Gang, Kitty Cat Spy Club, Teamsters, Couch of Eureka, and Gambling Sounds were pretty impressive. There's not much division of claim between KRS and Lookout bands, signaling shifting aesthetics of both labels. (gc)



Varnaline - "Dance Like We Used To" 7", *Man Of Sin* (Zero Hour)
Varnaline features 2 guys from Space Needle. This 7" shows off their versatility. "Dance..." is a mature rocker that's packed with guitar action. "Sneer Society" is spare and countryish (kind of like Palace), with female backing vocals. I go for the prettier bare-bones stuff, but both sides are good. The album was more just Anders Parker (I really dig his name. can't explain it). I like the rawer acoustic-based country of songs like "Gary's Paranoia", "Thorns & Such" and "Dust", though the fuzzed pop-rock of "No Decision No Disciple" and "In The Year Of Dope" is equally appealing. My favorite on here is the plainly instrumented but terribly beautiful "Want You". Appeals to those who like their music melancholy and comely. (yc)

Velocity Girl - *Gilded Stars And Zealous Hearts* (Sub Pop), "Seven Seas" 7" (Heaven)

Many of the male VG, i.e. Sarah, fans still drool over her even though she has gotten married to her sweetheart and has a very noticeable diamond ring on her fourth finger. However, they probably have reason to. Her somewhat nasal, whiny, sweet vocals along with Archie's vocals and the poppy instrumentation make this album another must-have for the true VG fan. Following in the *Simpatico*

tradition, the album features mostly "jump-up-and-down" "head-bobbing" songs and jingle-jangly guitars in such songs as "Formula 1 Throwaway", "Lose Something", and "Finest Hour". My favorites are the duets, "Just Like That" and "It's Not For You". The more melancholy songs are also first-rate. Like *Simpatico*, the album is a bit overproduced. Sarah's vocals are too loud at times, and the drums are barely audible. VG in concert is always better than the recording (except that they skimp on the background vocals sometimes). But for those of us who can't tour with VG, the album will just have to do. It's pretty awesome anyway.

"Seven Seas": This UK import could easily break your piggy bank. With only two cover songs, you might wonder if your hard-earned dollars are worth it. What is the opportunity cost? Two meals? Covering Echo and the Bunnymen and the Pastels, VG does two great renditions of "Seven Seas" and "Breaking Lines". "Seven Seas" alone is almost worth the cost. So starve for a day. At least you'll have this record to stun fellow pop friends with. Oh, there's also a teeny-weeny zine called *Heaven Sent* that might be included. Issue number 13, entitled "Big Balls of Fun" features an interview with VG and some interesting caricatures of the VG members. That's another quasi- and pseudo- plus. (ec)

Versus - Deep Red EP (Teenbeat)

Versus consistently turns out precise guitar pop that invades your head even though you're not aware of it. This five song e.p. is no exception, with a little looser delivery than usual, and their usual blend of two parts pristine jangly stuff blended with one part spasmic guitar crunch. "Shooting Star" is a blast, and I like listening to the title track late at night when I'm sleepy; the string section is a soothing antidote to my normal listening fare. (al)

Vitapup - An Hour With (Plump, 30 W 21st St 7th floor, New York, NY 10010)

This record fascinates in its diversity of styles. My favorite tunes are the punky Unwound-sounding ones like "Dragonfly," but there are weird hip hop spiels and spoken word set to fusion jazz stirrings. I first heard them as background music at Berkeley Square, which is not the most favorable context. Even so, the tune caught me off guard and had me envisioning cosmology for the white punk funksters. Somewhere in the vicinity of early Fugazi, maybe the New York/East Coast geography is what makes Vitapup so fresh to my West Coast ears. There's also just rad musicianship and the sense of experimental fusion that keeps one guessing. (gc)

Wipers - The Herd (Tim Kerr)

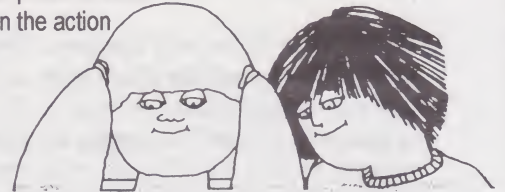
This band has been around for something like a decade, consisting of main man Greg Sage and a rotating line-up (Steve Plouf drums on this, brother to Scott of Spinanes). Wipers used to be Portland-based, but Greg has relocated to Phoenix. Anyhow, the years have seemed to tame the music some. I guess the speedier stuff is like a northwest spin put on surf punk. The vocals are kind of 80's and sound a bit removed from the music. The album gets a little monotonous. The not so great lyrics mislead - there is a definite depth to the thought behind them - which is too bad for the casual listener. You can try this or some of their older stuff for the sake of historical relevance. (yc)



The Wrens - Secaucus (Grass)

The Wrens' second album is titled *Secaucus*. They're like a rock 'n' roll Michael Dukakis. They ran in the 80's and struck out with the ladies and George won't give them props though they rock us.

One guy sounds lots like Joe Jackson. Especially on songs like "Distraction". Beach Boys harmonies abound. "Indie 500" sports boogie piano sounds so listen up and get in on the action (g&y)



Split 7"s

Car Bomb/Fisticuffs Bluff (Troubleman, 16 Willow St, Bayonne, NJ 07002)

Car Bomb are pretty well-known in the Midwest. In CA, the Fisticuffs Bluff carried a bit of weight during their brief existence featuring Drew of Floodgate, Summer singing, and in this incarnation, I believe Yoshi was drumming. "Pre-installed" starts off soft and pretty before catching hell, one of their finest moments. Car Bomb are pretty entertaining, a kind of Nation of Ulysses vibe going on, punchy spastic punk. I'd like to get more of their stuff, good music for jumping on the bed to. (gc)

Kid Dynamo/Track Star (Chocolate River (Deconstruction))

At first I thought this would be a weird combination, the bands would only seem to share an admiration of Pavement. But thinking it over, both have a knack for going from quiet to painfully loud. Track Star ends up having the louder punk tunes, short angry spurts. Kid Dynamo's "Six Speed" is actually a better pop tune that should be familiar to most longtime fans. It's the one that goes "I've been jaded", and sums up every bitter moment spread out over a longer course. Promising debut from the Chocolate River label. (gc)

Shove/Speedking (Omnibus)

Shove is speedy catchy girl singer pop punk from Davis. Speedking is ominous angsty guitar riffage out of NYC. Both songs are pretty good. (yc)

Texas is the Reason/Promise Ring (Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Rd, Wilmington, DE 19810)

Promise Ring supposedly has someone from the defunct Cap'n Jazz with them now. Their song "E. Texas Ave" is tight, brief and has some neat bass melodies. Texas is the Reason is more of a modern rock band, smooth vocals and big sound. They're putting out records on Revelation, if that gives you an idea. (gc)

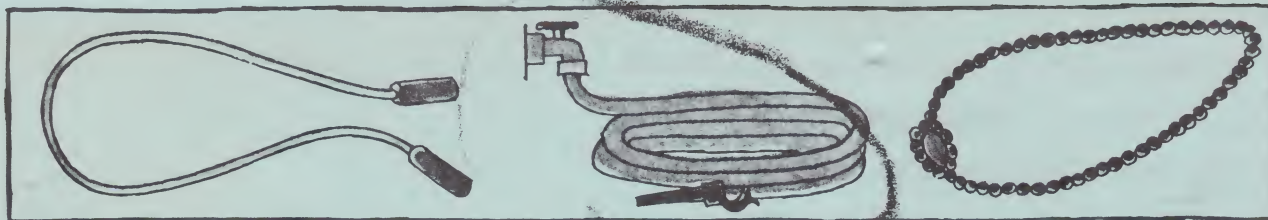
Stuff we would have liked and reviewed if the fucking labels had bothered to send them to us (bitter? who us?):

Bedhead, Bikini Kill, Built To Spill, Bunnygrunt, Cars Get Crushed, Chisel, Comet Gain, Crownhate Ruin, Delta '72, Dub Narcotic Sound System, Gastr Del Sol, Glo-worm, Grifters, Holiday, Holiday Flyer, June of 44, Lincoln, Madigan, The Make-Up, Moped, My Favorite, New Bad Things, Nuzzle, Polvo, Rock Band No. 47, Ruby Falls, Sleepyhead, Smog, Softies, Those Bastard Souls, Topps All-Stars #2, Tortoise, Vehicle Flips

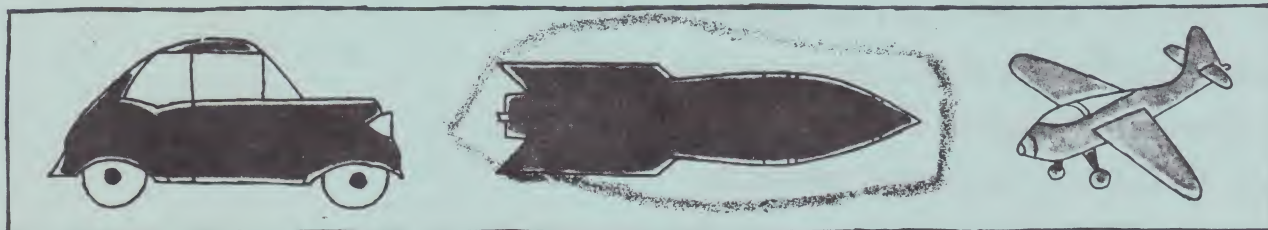
Allied - PO Box 460683, San Francisco, CA 94146
Big Cat - 67 Vestry St 5th floor, New York, NY 10013
Candy Ass - Box 42832 Portland, OR 97242
Chainsaw - PO Box 42600, Portland, OR 97242
Communion - 290-C Napoleon St, San Francisco, CA 94124
Darla - 625 Scott St #301, San Francisco, CA, 94117
Emperor Jones/Trance - PO Box 49771, Austin, TX 78765
Grass Records - 72 Madison Ave 8th fl, New York, NY 10016
Harriet - PO Box 649, Cambridge, MA 02238
Headhunter - 4901-906 Morena Blvd, San Diego, CA 92117
K - PO Box 7154, Olympia, WA 98507
Kill Rock Stars - 120 NE State St #418, Olympia, WA 98501
Krown Pocket - 3128 Rowena Ave #2, Los Angeles, CA 90027
Lookout -PO Box 11374, Berkeley, CA 94712
March -PO Box 578396, Chicago, CA 60657
Matador - 676 Broadway, New York, NY 10012
Merge - PO Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Mute - 140 West 22nd St #10a, New York, NY 10011
Omnibus - PO Box 4522, Davis, CA 95617
Pop Narcotic - 1085 Commonwealth Ave #339, Boston, MA 02215
Silver Girl - PO Box 161024, San Diego, CA 92176
Slumberland - Box 14731, Berkeley, CA 94701
Southern - PO Box 25529, Chicago, IL 60625
SubPop - 1932 First Ave, Ste 1103, Seattle, WA 98101
TAG - 14 E 60th St, New York, NY 10022
TeenBeat - PO Box 50373, Washington, DC 20091
Thrill Jockey - PO Box 476794, Chicago, IL 60647
Touch & Go - 4311 N Ravenswood Ave, Chicago, IL 60613
Up - PO Box 21328, Seattle, WA 98111-3328
Zero Hour - 14 West 23rd St 4th floor, New York, NY 10010



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Circle the fastest thing in this box.

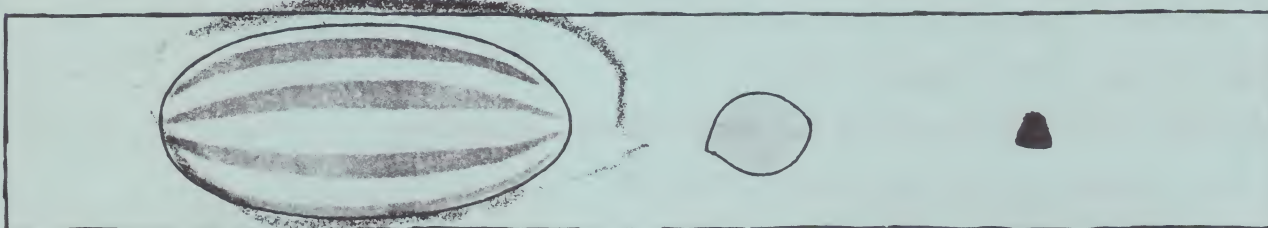


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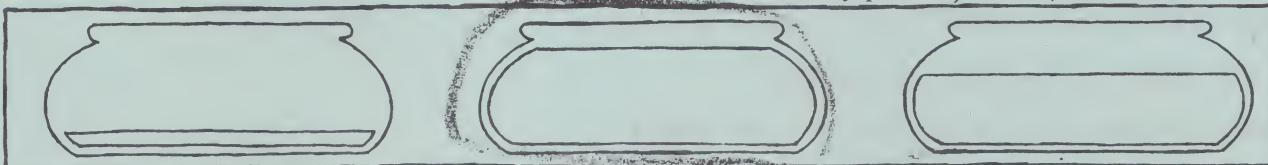
Circle the heaviest thing in this box.

issue eight: interviews w/tattle tale,
trenchmouth, heavy vegetable.



Circle the fullest thing in this box.

issue seven: interviews w/superchunk,
seam, uncle tupelo, shadowy men on a
shadowy planet, j church, candice k.



Circle the one that takes the most time to do.

